6

MARITAL EXCHANGE AND ALLIANCE RELATIONSHIP

Marriage is an important institution among the Mudugas which involves a kind of exchange of persons linking families and descent groups and the various forms of compensation payment Muduga marriages is seldom associated with prolonged ceremony or major ritual procedures and in most cases it is distinctly secular. When an adult male and a female come together and start performing domestic activities and assist each other in other household affairs and agricultural activities, they are said to be married to each other The husband will have access to the wife's sexuality and exercise right over the children born to her Hence, mamage is a redistribution of female productive and reproductive powers which makes a new generation socially possible For the Mudugas, marriage not only makes for the gratification of sexual desires, but also for the mutual co-operation and sharing of labour and food

Bilateral cross-cousin mamage is the prescribed rule and there is no clear preference to either patrilateral cross-cousin or matrilateral cross-cousin and both arc treated equal Thus it is ideal for a man has to marry a female cross relative who is in the kin category *attiai* and a female has to marry a male cross relative in the category *machan* [1] People prefer to marry with families with whom there is previous kinship and previous inter-marriages Their first choice is from amongst their relatives, and from the group where they have already established an alliance relationship Mamage between the children of brother and sister, further consolidates the kinship between the two families and ensures an intimate and closer relationship between their members for their life time The kin terms used to refer to the sister's children in the case of brother and brother's children in the case of sister are quite clearly indicate the presence of bilatera cross-cousin mamage. A woman refers her brother's son as *barmakan* (son-in-law) and brother's daughter as *barmaka* (daughter-in-law) even before their mamage So also a brother refers to his sister's son as *barmakan* and sister's daughter as *barmaka* It is the strong brother-sister sibling bond which plays an important role in the contracting of mamage between cross-cousins.

Parents of a boy always think that if their son is married to a girl who is from the circle of their already related kin, they will be assured of all co-operation and care by their daughter-in-law. Moreover, it is better for a woman not to move into a totally strange family or hamlet. If she is mamed to a genealogically close cross-cousin, most of the people in that family or hamlet will be familiar and will be related to her through several genealogical connections This clearly shows that her link to them will not be merely an affinal one Such an in-married woman will be seen not only as daughter-in-law but also as the close niece of several of their residents.

Right from the childhood, the cross-cousins are treated by relatives of both sides as potential spouses. It would often bring serious criticism if a person marries outside his km circle when he has a genealogically close cross-cousin or other close relative whom he could have mamed However, due to various factors, marriages do not always occur between the real cross-cousin and it vanes situationally from real to classificatory cross-cousins depending on the genealogical knowledge Cross-cousin marriage is the way b> which the links between the descent group could be realised and maintained in continuing alliance relationship with other descent groups

Out of a total of 75 marriages recorded from Thaze-Abbannoor, 23 (26 66°o) marriages were with real cross-cousins, and 29 (38 66°o) were with classificatory cross-cousins The data also shows that 12 (16%) marriages were with the category father's male cross-cousins daughter and 2. (2 66%) with the category mother's female cross-cousin's daughter (see table 6 1)

Table 6 1 Type of marriage

Type of marriages	Frequency	Percentage
FZD (real)	9	12.00
MBD (real)	11	14.66
FZD (classificatory)	15	20 00
MBD (classificatory)	14	18.66
F'FZS'D , F'MBS'D	7	9.33
F'FZS'D / F'MBS'D (class)	5	666
M'FZD'D / M'MBD'D	2	2.66
ZD (classificatory)	4	5.33
FZ (classificatory)	1	1 33
'MZ'	2	266
FZHZ	2	266
Female cross-cousin's daughter	1	1 33
Father's female cross-cousin	2	266
Total	75	100

From this it is clear that a Mudugas not only prescribe bilateral cross-cousin marriage but also practice it It is clear that they married cross cousins real or classificatory in 74% of unions recorded dunng this study The remaining 16°. of marriages are cases of union in which the relationship between the spouses are not prescribed by the society as marriageable type

Thus mamage takes place with related km groups or families whose members know very clearly to which kin categories they all fall Moreover, through the vertical and lateral extension of terminology itself it is evident whether they are in marriageable or non-marriageable category. Hence, the notion of descent group and the knowledge regarding marriageability and non-marriageability between descent groups are less important as far as Muduga marriage is concerned. The kin terminological system itself

clearly depicts the distinction between cross relatives with whom marriage is permitted and parallel relatives with whom marriage is prohibited- Hence the kin terminology is considered as a path leading tow ards marriage alliances.

Eventhough in certain cases when marriages are not between real or classificatory cross-cousins, the kinship terms used by members of both sides implies that the marriage has taken place between cross-cousin, i e., children of brother and sister. No separate terms are used for address in such situations, and the terms of address and terms of reference are the same. Thus the groom's father addresses his daughter-in-law's mother as 'sister' and the groom's mother addresses her daughter-in-law's father as 'brother'. This shows that cross-cousins are the most preferred mate and the rule of bilateral cross-cousin marri age is prescriptive at the ideological level.

A marriage union is regulated by TWO basic rules which operates in all marriages. These are the positive and negative marriage rules which demarcate, respectively, the unit of endogamy and the unit of exogamy These are the limits within which an individual should marry as well as the calegones of individuals he is prescribed to marry The rule of exogamy prohibits marriage within ones own patnhneal descent group or *kottam* The rule of endogamy is the requirement to marry within the larger unit, the community Thus a person is permitted to enter in marriage only with a person belonging to the same community The only exception to be noted here that the boundary of the endogamous unit extends to the neighbouring Kurumbas with whom there exist no mamage restrictions and who have similar patrilineal descent system In practice the rule of exogamy, among the Mudugas, is not always determined by an apparent descent identity. The kinship terminology functions in categorizing its members, and these conceptual distinctions are used to express exogamic and endogamic rules

The members of a descent group are considered to be structurally equivalent to siblings, parents, grand-parents, children and grand-children depending upon the generational differences Since patrilateral parallel cousins or descent group members share the same blood, they are not permitted to enter in marriage relation. Cross-cousins are fundamentally different from parallel cousins. Because cross relatives do not share the same blood and possess different blood, they are considered as potential spouses and permitted to marry. However, matrilateral parallel cousins who are not of the same

descent group and who are not sharers of the same blood are prohibited from marriage. The prohibition of matrilateral parallel cousin marriage, unlike the prohibition of marriage between patrilateral parallel cousins, seems apparently inconsistent with the rule of clan exogamy. It makes sense only in the context of the rule of kin terminological extension and the equivalence of same-sex siblings.

Thus the equations, FeBW = MeZ and FyBW = MyZ clearly answer this problem. This equivalence rule depicted in the terminological paradigm of a two-section system reveals the rule of descent exogamy implicit in it. However, it cannot be concluded that the marriage custom and practice is based on or determined by the terminological rules. Rather, it should be understood that terminology is only the product of mamage customs and practices prevalent in a society and helps in aptly depicting the rule of mamage.

There is no specific Muduga term for incest. Marrying into a forbidden category is referred by saying "*muraithetti edukkirathu*", or they use the word "*thappu seyrathu*" which is also applied to wrong doing However, the strict observance of prohibition of mamage with unmamageable categones apply to a restricted extent 1 e , upto a circle of known relatives of ego Beyond this, the rule restricting mamage with unmamageable categories in certain cases is transcended by the tendency to perpetuate the affinal links between the two groups even at the cost of contracting such marriages which according to the logical kin terminological extension seems irregular In most cases, these types of unions fall in the terminological relationship of 'mother's brother* - 'sister's daughter* and 'sister's son - mother's sister* It is to be mentioned here that persons belonging to these two sets are cross relatives (either for ego or for ego's agnatic group) even though they belong to different generations.[2] The implicit purpose behind such unions being the intention to continue the relationship of affinity already existing between the two families or kin groups

Wrong marital unions between persons who recognise relationship in stipulated kinship categones pose inescapable quandaries, for pnor classifications always conflict with those created by such marriages Mamages to relatives known to be related in the wrong way is very troublesome to the implementation of kinship classifications Thus methods of terminological adjustments are established as rules for kin mamages that are wrong from the perspective of the terminology but which society nevertheless permits.

without causing serious structural disturbance (discussed in the previous Chapter). These terminological adjustments are necessary because, as Trautmann says "the Dravidian terminology is inexorable and reckless of demographic realities" (1981:228).

Owing to the fact that the prescribed mates are not always available other alternative possibilities of marital union have been noted among the Mudugas which could be treated anomalies to the ideal one. Few cases of such anomalies which deviate from the ideal pattern are given below :

Case 1 Mallan's son Enyan of Thaze-Abbannoor had married his father's classificatory brother's daughter's daughter Neeli Thus Neeli is in the category 'sister's daughter* for Enyan However, if the relationship is traced through Neeli's father Chellan, then Chellan is father's brother's wife's classificatory brother for Enyan Through the rule of terminological extension, Chellan is equivalent to 'maman' (MB), whose daughter could be married

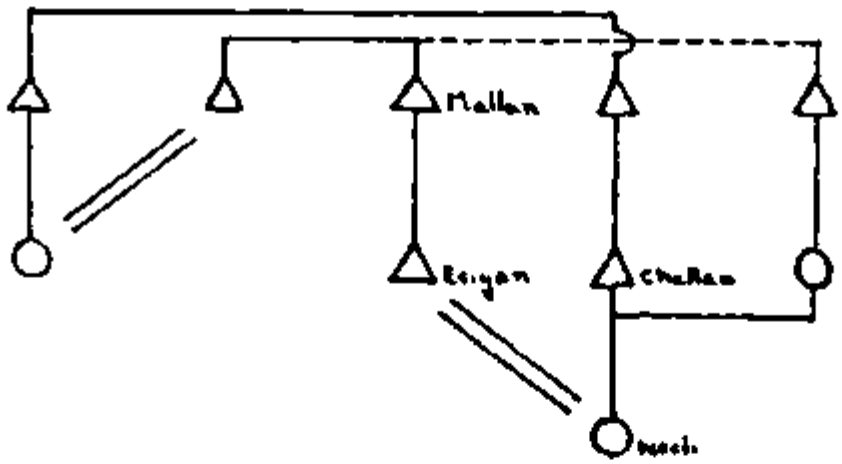

Fig 6 1 Genealogy showing relationship between Enyan and Neeli

Case 2. Chellan's son Panali of Thaze-Abbannoor had married his mother's father's brother's daughter Kuppe. Thus Kuppe is in the category 'mother's sister' for Panali. However, since Kuppe's brother Velli had married Chellan's brother's daughter, Panali and Velli are in the category brother-in-laws and could marry brother-in-law's sister.

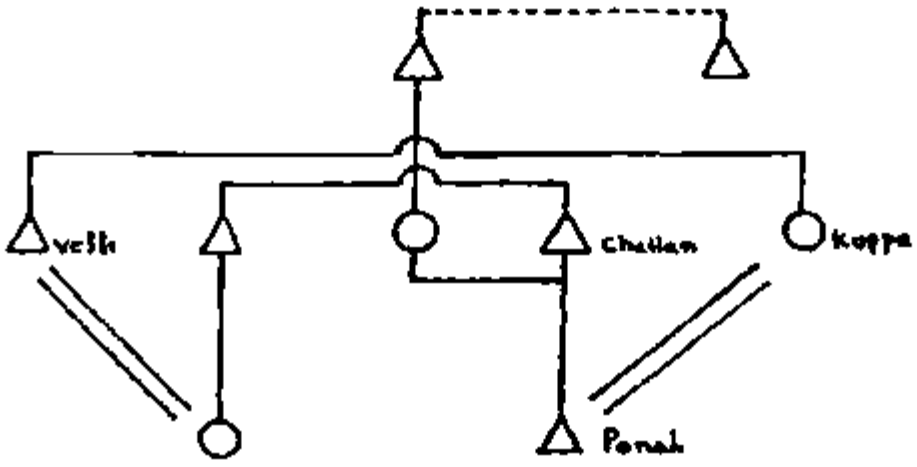

Fig 6 2 Genealogy showing relationship between Panah and Kuppe

Case 3 At Thaze-Abbannoor, Kakki's wife Neeli's younger sister Vanji has been married by Kakki's son Bokken (Bokken is borne for Kakki's first wife Vellachi) Here in this case, Bokken has married a woman who is in the category 'mother's sister'

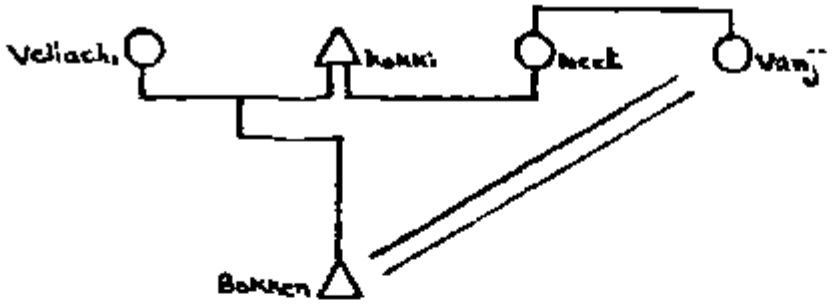

Fig 6 3 Genealogy showing relationship between Bokken and Vanji

Case 4 In another case from Thaze-Abbannoor, Manji's son Kakki married his father's sister's husband's (Kaden) younger sister Barme from Thazc-Thodukki hamlet Kaden is in the category *maman* for Kakki and hence *maman's* sister is *sinnaavai* (mother's younger sister) for Kakki

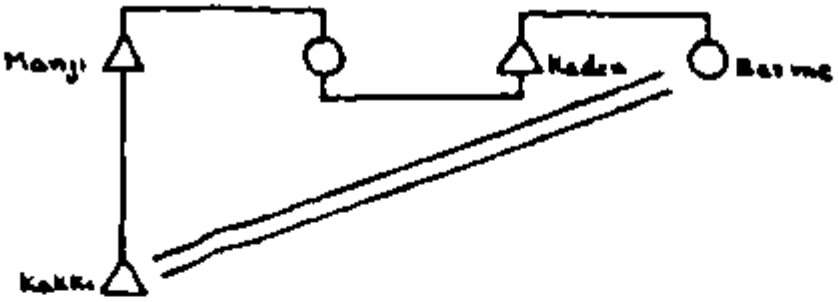

Fig 6 4 Genealogy showing relationship between Kakki and Barme

Case 5. At Veettiyoor, Chinnayan's father's sister's son Ponnan had married Chinnayan's daughter Chelli. For Ponnan, Chinnayan is in the *machan* (father's sister's son) category. Thus Chelli is mamed to her father's brother-in-law who is *maman* for her. This marriage falls into the MB-ZD type.

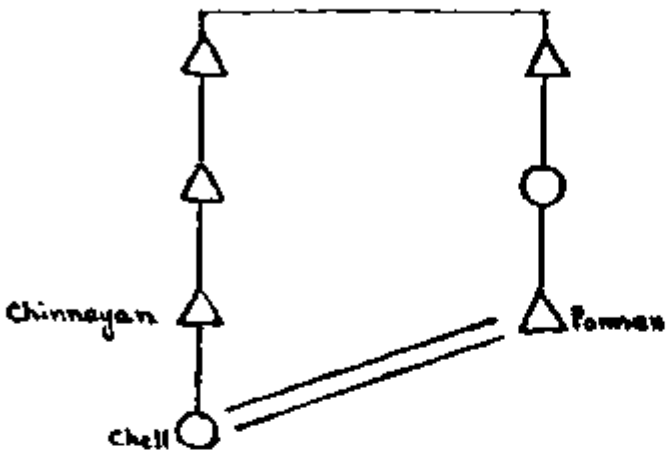

Fig.6 5. Genealogy showing relationship between Chelli and Ponnam

From the above cases it is evident that most of the 'wrong marriages' arc of the type MB – ZD and MZ - ZS. It is noted that mother's sister and sister's daughter arc not members of ego's descent group and fall in the cross category Thus as long as these women need not always fits into a category of people that ego cannot marry, they are possible mamage partner (i e., cross relatives) though of different generation to ego

Even if the union is of a prohibited category, the husband wife relation wi 1 be recognised, provided that the couple openly co-operate in the household affairs, child rearing, and in agricultural activities. Thus the status of husband and wife is dependent on a pattern of interaction between the two It is the deta. s of domestic interaction

between the two that people count as evidence of their marital status — whether the man clears field for her and whether she cultivates the land, cook and serve food for him.

There is no sexual freedom prior to marriage. Even though love making occurs among them, it is not supposed to lead to sexual intercourse. The love relationship is likely to dc\elop into marriage if they are in marriageable category.

If a particular marriage union pro\es to be satisfactory, more marriages are likely to follow between the two kin groups in future. Marriage, thus in a way, is used as a mechanism to reinforce the earlier existing kinship links. Once an alliance relationship is established between two groups, it continues and is transferred from generation to generation as an endunng process and the ongoing movement between descent groups depends on the strength of the alliance Every marriage must be reciprocated. One marriage reciprocates another so that each descent group both gives and receives a woman The failure to return a woman disrupts the quality of the relationship This give and take relationship between the two groups need not always occur simultaneously in the same generation Reciprocity may be immediate in the form of exchange of sisters, or a woman given in one generation will be reciprocated few generations after

The patnlineal segment of a descent group will be maintaining a consistent affinal transactions of the exchange of women between the patnhneal segment of another descent group Once alliance is established, they do not want to cut off the links, but to maintain the exchange relationship endunng through generations The alliance which is established between two families will be extended lo other closcly related families of the descent group Thus there is a strong tendency to repeat the km marriages between agnatic segments of two descent groups which creates an obligat *on* to 'give and take' of women which to an extent restricts the choice in all subsequent transactions The following cases depicts the continuous transactions of women between agnatic segments of two patnhneal descent groups

Case1 . Kali of Thaze-Abbannoor belonging lo *Manchipattu Kalu* married Ma lan*s father's sister from Boodar hamlet In the next generation, Kali's son Mandi married Mallan's daughter and again in the subsequent generation, Mandi's son Kali married Mallan's daughter and Mandi's daughter was given for Mallan's son Chekidan. In the next generation, Chekidan's son Bam married Kali's daughter Nanji and Chekidan s

daughter has been given for **Mandi's** son's son Panali. Mandi's **classificatory** brother's daughter had mamed Mallan's brother's son Panali and **Panali 's** daughter Mallika was given to **Mandi's** grandson Kaden.

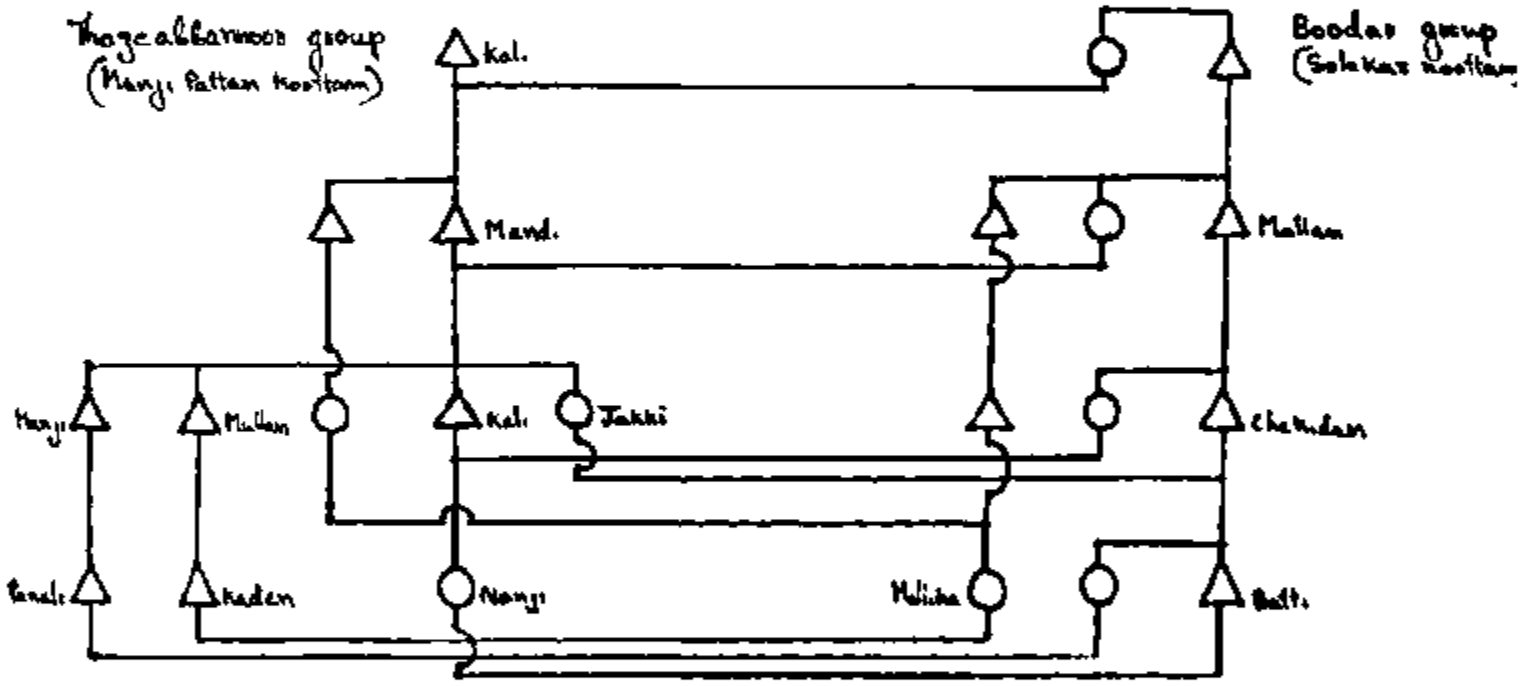

Fig 6 6 Alliance relationship **between** the patnlmcal segments **of Thaze-Abbannoor** and Boodar.

Case 2 Budde of Thaze-Abbannoor married Thenkan's daughter Rangi from Veettiyoor and Budde's classificatory younger 'brother' Ooshi married Thenkan's younger brother Mathan's daughter Mallı. Budde's sister Kade was married to her mother's classificatory brother's son Budde* of Vettiyoor. Budde's and Ooshi's classificatory sister Meddi was given to Mathan's son Velli and Velli's daughter was married to Budde's younger brother's son Mathan. In the next generation, Budde's son Kakki married his MBD Neeli from Veettiyoor and Kakkı's son Bokken married Neeli's younger sister Vanji-Kakkı's classificatory brother's (Kaden) daughter was given to Neelı's brother's son. Budde's classificatory brother's son Manchi has married Neelı's father's classificatory brother's daughter

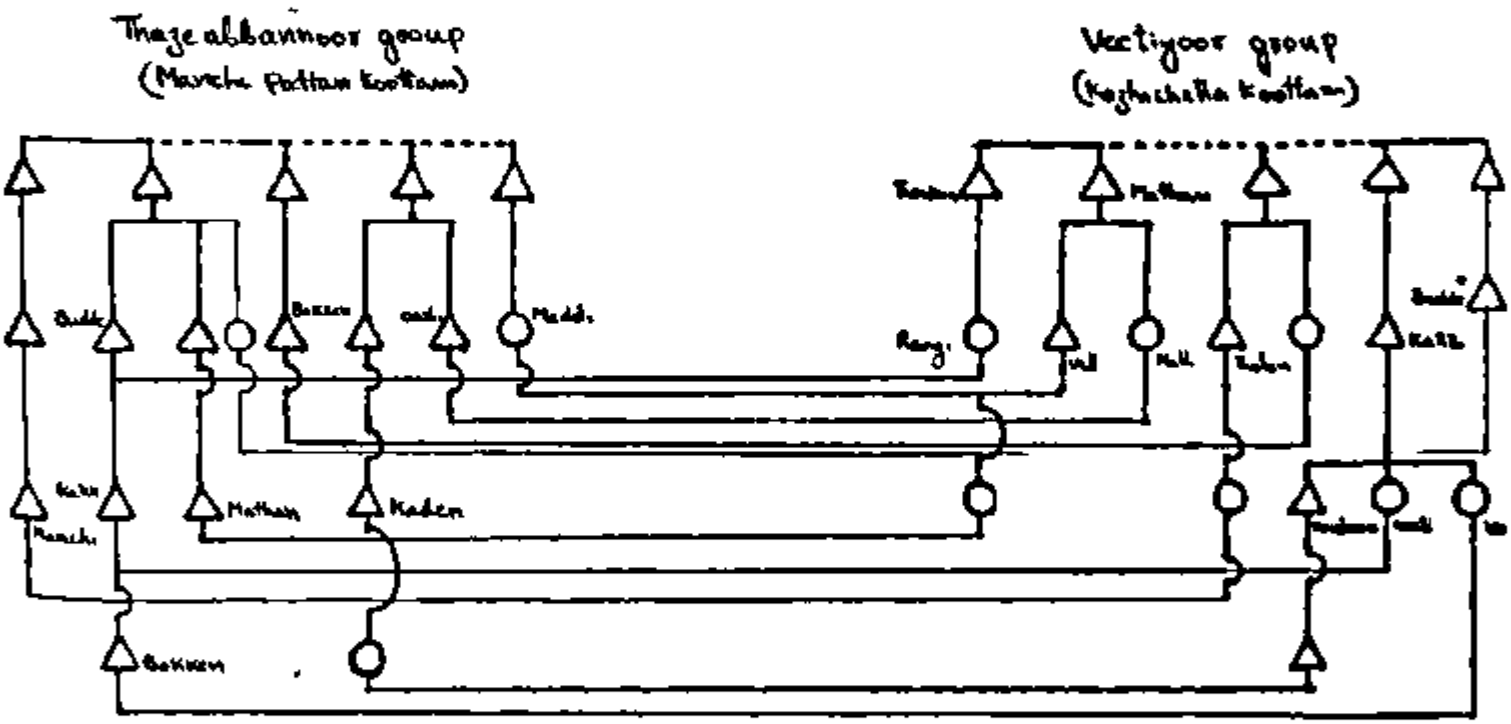

Fıg 6 7 Alliance relationship between the patrlineal segments of Thaze-Abbannoor xnd Veettiyoor.

Case 3 The patrihneal descent group of Karuvara hamlet has been maintaining a consistent marital exchange with the agnatic segment of Thaze-AbbannooT continuing through generations. From Karuvara hamlet, Neelan's brother's daughter Badigi had been married to Velli of Thaze-Abbannoor. In the next generation, Neelan's son Chellan married Thaze-Abbannoor. Budde's daughter Rami from Thaze-Abbannoor, and Budde's son Kakki married Neelan's daughter Vellachi Budde's 'brother' Bokken's daughter Malli was given to Neelan's second son Chathan. The youngest son Neelan mamed Budde's classificatory brother's (Mathan) daughter and Neelan's son married Budde's brother's (Velli) grand son's (Mathan) son Linkan. Chathan's elder brother Karimen's son Vella married Velli's classificatory sister Vellachi. Karimen's daughter Neeli was given to Budde's brother's (Ooshi) son Velli, and Neeli's younger sister to Budde's classificatory brother Choken's son Man

Chathan's daughter Vellachi was mamed to Budde's classificatory brother's (Kiliyan) son Kakkilinkan, and younger daughter Karimi to Ooshi's brother's son Ramaswami Chathan's brother's (Chellan) daughter Mari was given to Velli's son Kali and Chellan's another daughter to Velli's elder brother's (Mallan) son Enyan Chellan's son Pariah marned Ooshi's daughter Kuppe who was earlier married to Chellan"* brother's so Nanjan Panah's younger brother Murugan mamed his mother's brother's, (Kakki) daughter

Karuvara Neelan's father's classificatory brother Naiacchan had first mamed Mathan's (Budde's classificatory brother) sister and later mamed Budde's brother's (Kurili) daughter for Thaze-Abbannoor

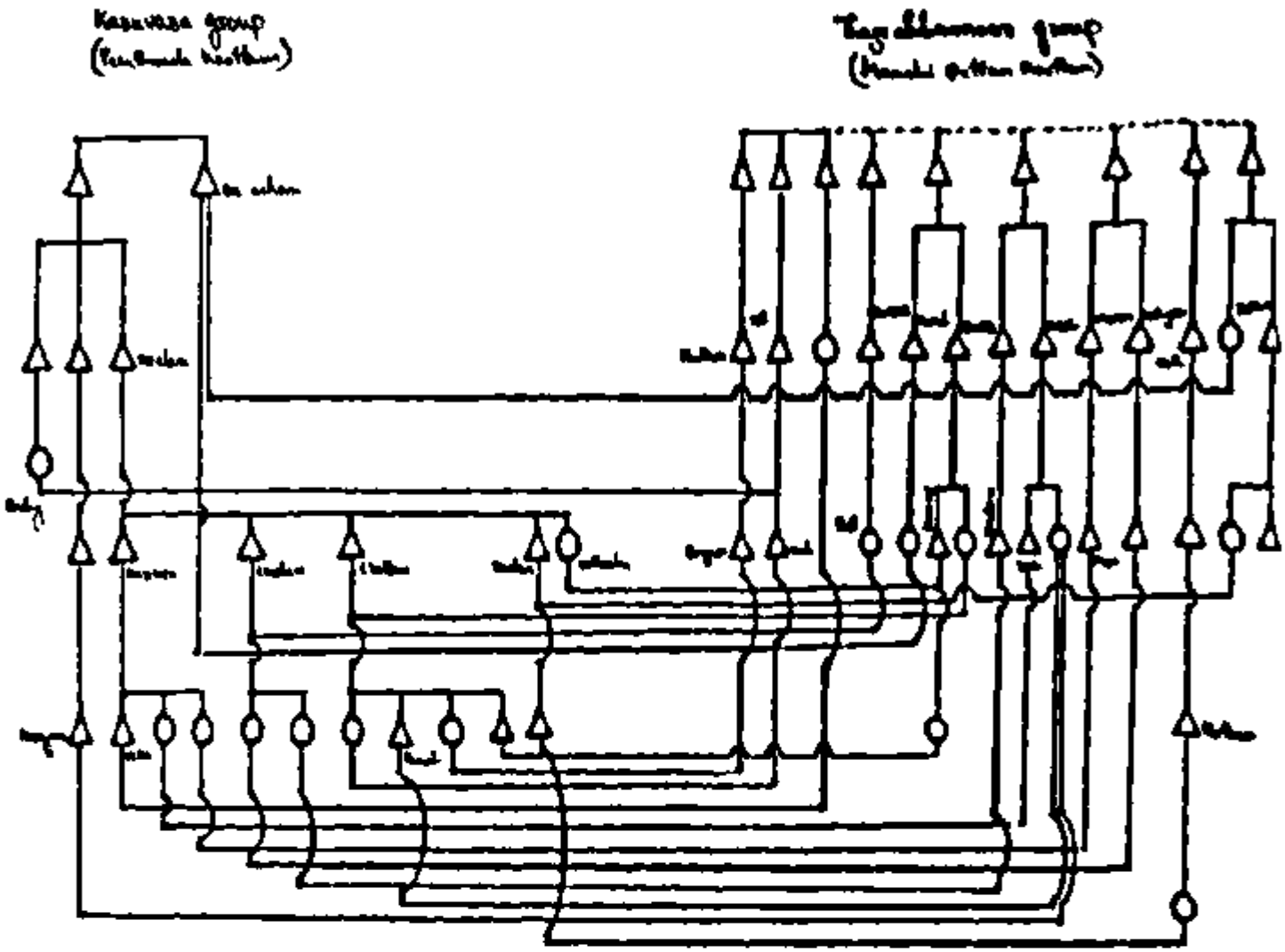

Fig 6 8 Alliance relationship between the patrilineal segments of Thaze-Abbannoor and Karuvara

Although marriage involves the 'give and take' relationship between two descent groups, the marriage exchanges cannot be treated as a relationship involving and depending on exclusively two descent groupi It is significant to note that the rule of kin categories and terminological extension defines the nature of relationship (i e.

marriageable or unmamageable) with other descent groups of the endocarnous community not previously related, by establishing links through related groups, and serves to continue the alliance relationship.

As already mentioned among the Mudugas, marriage exchange takes place with whom there exist previous kinship and previous inter-marriages. However, if they are not aware of the nature of relationship they will try to find out and be assured about the category into which they fall by tracing the relationship through the rule of kin terminological extension. The rule stating 'affine's affines as kin* and its corollaries form the underlying principle through which the extension of the kin categories is worked out Thus when 'A' of 'P' descent group enter in marital union with B' of 'Q' descent group, it ensures that any two members of these descent group can enter in marriage relationship The relationship may be extended vertically or laterally through the already related affines or affine's affines Thus if 'B' bad a brother 'C', who married a female 'D' belonging to the descent group 'R', then a marriage between a member of 'P' and a member of 'R' cannot be legally permitted since according to the rule of terminological extension, members of 'R' are affine's, affine i e, kin for 'P' The nature of this alliance relationship can be clearly explained by citing case from Thaze-Abbannoor

Thaze-Abbannoor *Manchi pattan koottam* is having continuous alliance relationship over generations with Karuvara *Paruthimala koottam* and also with Veetiyoor *Kozhichella koottam* (discussed above) Thus for karuvara *Paruthimala koottam,* Veetiyoor *Kozhichella koottam* are parallel relatives and are prohibited from marital exchanges since they are related as 'affine's affine'. The elder and younger sisters of Tholan of *Kozhichella koottam* was married by Kumaran of VeetJ>oor *Vandichindan koottam* and Bokken of Thazc-Abbannoor *Manchipattan koottam* respectively Since Thaze-Abbannoor *kooitam* is maintaining affinal relationship with *Kozhtchella koottam,* for them *Vandichndan koottam* is related as affine's affne i e parallel relatnes. Moreover, this parallel relationship is pro\ed when Kakki of Thaze-Abbannoor married Neeli who was earlier married by Lacchi of *Vandichndan koottam* For Karuvara *Paruthimala koottam, Vandichndakoottam* is related as their *'cross* relative's parallel relative's and hence treated as cross relatives. Thus Lacchi's *son* Raju of *Vandichindan koottam* has married Chathan's daughter of *Paruthimal kootam*

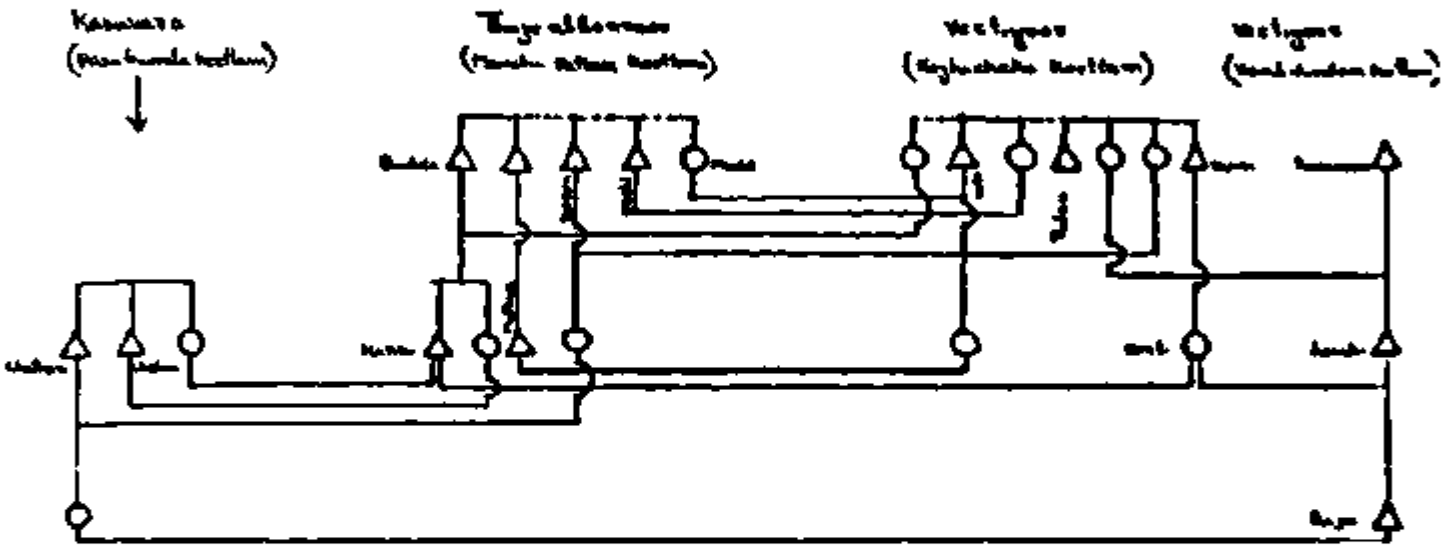

Fig 6 9 Alliance relationship between patrilineal segments of Karuvara, Thaze-Abbannoor and Veettiyoor hamlet.

A great deal of mutual assistance and support do takes place between closely related kinsmen and are deeply obliged to each other Descent groups that interact with each other and co-operate more frequently and share land tend to continue the alliance

relationship and exchange w omen- Thus the common residence and the sharing of land between affinal groups will lead to frequent intermarriages between the two groups.

However, it is to be mentioned here that, more number of marriages take place betw een members of outside hamlets. Alliance relationship and the marriage exchanges make for the movement of females from one group to another and functions in the reproduction of clan However, agnation functions in the formation of the clan People say that, it is women who are used to establish new relationship with the descent groups of other hamlets through alliance created by their exchange. Through these exchange, a network of relationship is developed with other hamlets Thus they consider women as the "path" for new relationship and through exchange women go around and establish link with other hamlets Once a new alliance is established w ith an *ooru*, the> will try to keep the relationship enduring through repeated 'give and take'. The people refer to this enduring exchange relationship when they say, "*kontum koduthum bantham ottichu pokirathu*", which means that through repeated give and take the affinal relationship is properly linked and maintained through generations. They never want to break the already established link with a kin group, and through repeated exchange, the relationship become more strong and cemented

While speaking about the cohesiveness and solidarity of the system derived by the continuous marital exchanges between groups, the Mudugas always try to equate it with the structure of a broom (*kalamaru*). The Muduga broom consists of two main bundles of dry tw igs closely tied together. While making a broom it w ill be tied lw ice such that the first tying divides the entire twigs into two bundles and through the second tying, half of the twigs from each bundles will be separated and tied together thus divid ng the broom into two bundles According to the Mudugas, this mechan sm of exchange of twigs between the bundles holds them tightly together making it a strong and cohesive structure Similarly, the exchange relations or 'give and take' between two groups ensures a net work of strong bonding between them giving rise to a well structured system binding them tightly together. They refer to this by saying, "*kontum koduthum emma icha bantham kettimurukrathu*", meaning "throu_h repeated 'give and lake we make our relationship more tight".

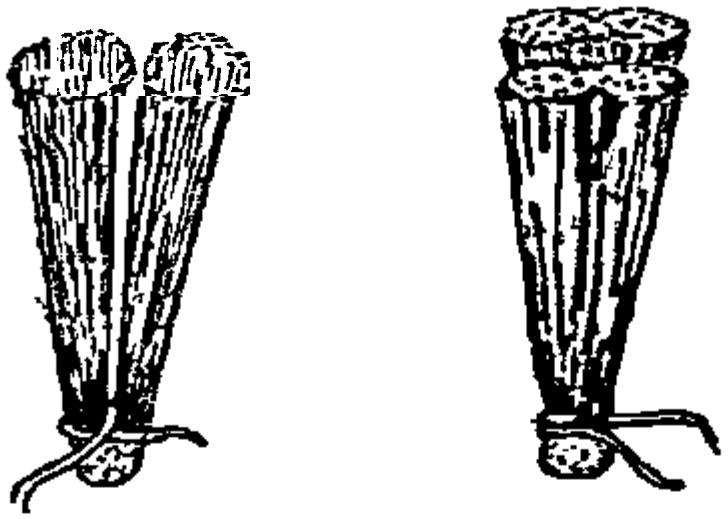

Fig 6 10 Tying of broom, analogous to marital exchange.

Thus every hamlet or its descent group will establish a set of exchange link with all other descent groups who are in affinal relationship. Affines who have taken women from a particular hamlet or its descent group are known as the *mappila* for that hamlet Their obligation towards their wife's agnates is clearly evident at the time of ancestral festivals and other ceremonial occasions. *Thalaimappila* is the senior most affine who has married the senior most women of the senior generation of a particular kin group or hamlet This *thalaimappila* will be having greater obligation and duty to perform at the time of *seeru* festival It is he who has to look after the cooking and serving of food for all who have assembled in the hamlet for the festival. He will be assisted by other in-laws *(mappila)* of that *ooru* who is 'younger' to him. Thus for Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet, Rangan of Thundoor hamlet who has married Kiliyan's elder sister of Thaze-Abbannoor is the *thalaimapila* for the hamlet.

The descent group functions as the unit of alliance and reciprocity However, the kin unit consisting of closely related agnatic members is the most active unit in marriages transferring women, bride-price, and any counter-prestations on behalf of the descent group as a whole. Thus the constituent close kin circle forms the focus around which the \anous activities operate and function as the operational units which drive the marriage relationships. Lipuma, while writing on the Maring marriage exchanges, depicts the people's notion, "a clan bears 'the name of the relationship* and stands 'together in marriage exchange' while the subclan develops the 'give and take of the relationship'"

and he sa> s, "it is the subclan which conducts the marriage negotiations, arranges the exchange and compensation and generally sets events in motion "(1988 : 152).

Even though the actual operation of alliance and the attendant exchange of gifts and prestations is confined to the immediate families, the ideal structure around which the implications of a particular marriage devolves is the descent group. Marriage alliance is organized and observed at the level of the patrilineal descent group — *koottam.* It is not the immediate members of the family who is taking a girl or giving a girl to another group. It is the *koottam* as a whole functioning as a unit which enters in this transaction. Marriage relation will bring the continuous flow of gifts, prestations and counter prestations between the two linked groups. Bride-price and all other associated compensation are raised from contributions from all members of the wife-taker's group and distributed to the wife-giver's group In the *panchayath* meeting where bride-price payment is made, the girl is handed over by the descent group through the *jathi* (third-man) to the *jathi* of the other group, and the bride-price is also received by the *jathi* on behalf of wife-giver's *koottam* from the *jathi* of the wife-taker's group Thus this is seen as a transaction taking place at the level of the descent group A woman who has been married into a group belongs to the *koottam* as a whole since all members have contributed to the bnde-pnee payment and hence the children belongs to the descent group However, it is to be mentioned here that, though the descent group as a whole holds primary nght in its female, the major share of the bride price goes to her father or brother and other immediate agnates

Among the Mudugas, a boy is ready for marriage when he is grown up and matured enough to manage the farmland work and other activities done by men such as hunting, cuning bamboo from forest, collection of honey, and doing labour work to as to earn for the household expenditure. A girl is considered to be ready for marriage after puberty. By this time she will be capable enough to look after the house hd responsibilities and well acquainted with agricultural activities. On the basis of the household survey, the average age of a girl al the time of her marriage is 16 years, and that of a bo> is 20 years The number of unmarried girls above the age of 16 in the tune hamlets where household survey was conducted were 17, and out of this only three were above the age 20. The number of unmarried boys above the age of 20 were 10

Among the Mudugas, proposal for a marriage are initialed by the boy's family, marked by the involvement of his parents, elder siblings, father's brothers and other elders of the close kin circle. It is considered degrading on the pan of the girls family to initiate a proposal.

In case of marriage taking place within the close network of relatives, the parents of the boy and girl agree to the marriage of their children when they are quite young. The formal negotiations are dispensed with and the settlement of marriage is relatively a simple affair. This type of marriage with immediate cross-cousins implies the transfer of alliance relationship established between the descent groups in the past generation and also shows that the immediate kin circles representing these two groups have already given assent to their consent. In such cases, the boy and the girl who are immediate cross-cousins are potential spouses to each other and once they reach maturity, they can start their family life No ritual or ceremony marks this change of status. What is happening here is that, past mamage transactions may be reflected in subsequent generations as an attempt to renew the alliance relationship But if the spouses are residing in separate hamlets and mamage ceremony is to be held, the negotiations arc formally conducted and proposal is always made, and the details are worked out between the households concerned in presence of elderly relatives of the hamlet. The discussions and decisions will be made by the most important members of the close kin circle like grandfather, father, father's brothers, etc., belonging to both the groups

Through mamage. a man exercise rights in a woman's labour power and reproductive capacities to live in a way befitting a dignified man Their co-operation and sharing of labour on the farm feeds them and their children The un on sets up an economic partnership between husband and wife in which each has extensive rights and obligations with respect to the other. The process of acqu n g a wife is essentia > a secular one, involving the physical transfer of the woman to her husband s group If the mamage is to persist, she must be successfully retained so that she forms a sexual and economic partnership w ith the man and eventually bean children who inherit his *stilus* as descent group member. There is no precise point at which the mamage is established, but the likelihood of it lasting depends upon two main factors the acceptance of the situation by the kinsmen and the birth of children.

For a marriage, prior to the proposal making and formal negotiations, the relevant line of inquiry may be whether the woman is hard-working, healthy and able to lead a stable family life and also whether she is faithful. Similarly, the girl's relatives will also collect information regarding whether the man is hardworking, shows concern for his wife, and take responsibility of the household expenditure. However, the most important inquiry is that whether there exist a "marriageability" or "marriageable *murai*" between the two families.

Marriage negotiation do not break on matters connected with bride-price, because bride-price payments do not always form a major item in the initial stage of marriage relation It only occurs in a later phase of their married life particularly in the case when no marriage ceremony as such is held Moreover, the payment of *parya-panam* (bnde-price) is not the sole responsibility of the immediate family members, but the descent group members collect together and contnbute to it Hence, the amount of bnde-price is not at all an issue during the negotiations

Regarding marriage special preference will be given to members who are residing nearby in the same hamlet with whom they have frequent interaction Members of different descent groups who occupy the same hamlet and in close proximity ha\e more interaction and they co-operate in economic activities, share land and other resources This makes them enter in alliance relation through the exchange of women or to renew the already existing alliance relation through generation.

However, people also prefer to establish alliance relationship with their close relatives in other hamlets so as to establish new line of interaction. With them there always exist a warm and polite relationship since they are not in frequent contact Moreover, they say that, since the spouse's hamlets arc away, they can make formal visits to their in-law's huts where they will be welcomed with more concern and respect and will also be presented with plenty of gifts from the related huts This formal visit is not possible when marriages are taking place within the same ham et

Whenever Mudugas go for marital relation with a new group, they will not only be concerned \\ith the immediate family, but will look into the number of closely related families and see how big is their kin circle and familial connections. They say that, if there are more number of closely related families, then the newly married couple could

lead a secure life and seek help and co-operation from these related families when they are in need. This nature of their alliance relation is very well depicted by them through the analogy of a tuberous climber called *saval-valli (Dioscorea* species). According to them, whenever they are in search of tubers, they select lo dig out the base of a plant which is often having more than three strings (*valli*). They will not usually dig the base which is having just one string, since tubers will be very few under it, and the entire labour of digging will be a waste. They are very much sure that, if they dig the base which is having three or more strings, they can gel sufficient quantity of tubers. Even if one or two strings do not produce tubers at its base, the others will produce sufficient number of tubers Similarly, in the case of marriage, Mudugas prefer to have alliance relationship with families who arc ha\mg quite a large circle of kinsmen and closely related families This will ensure the stability of family life of the new couples and will have many related families and kinsmen to extend support and cooperation whenever needed

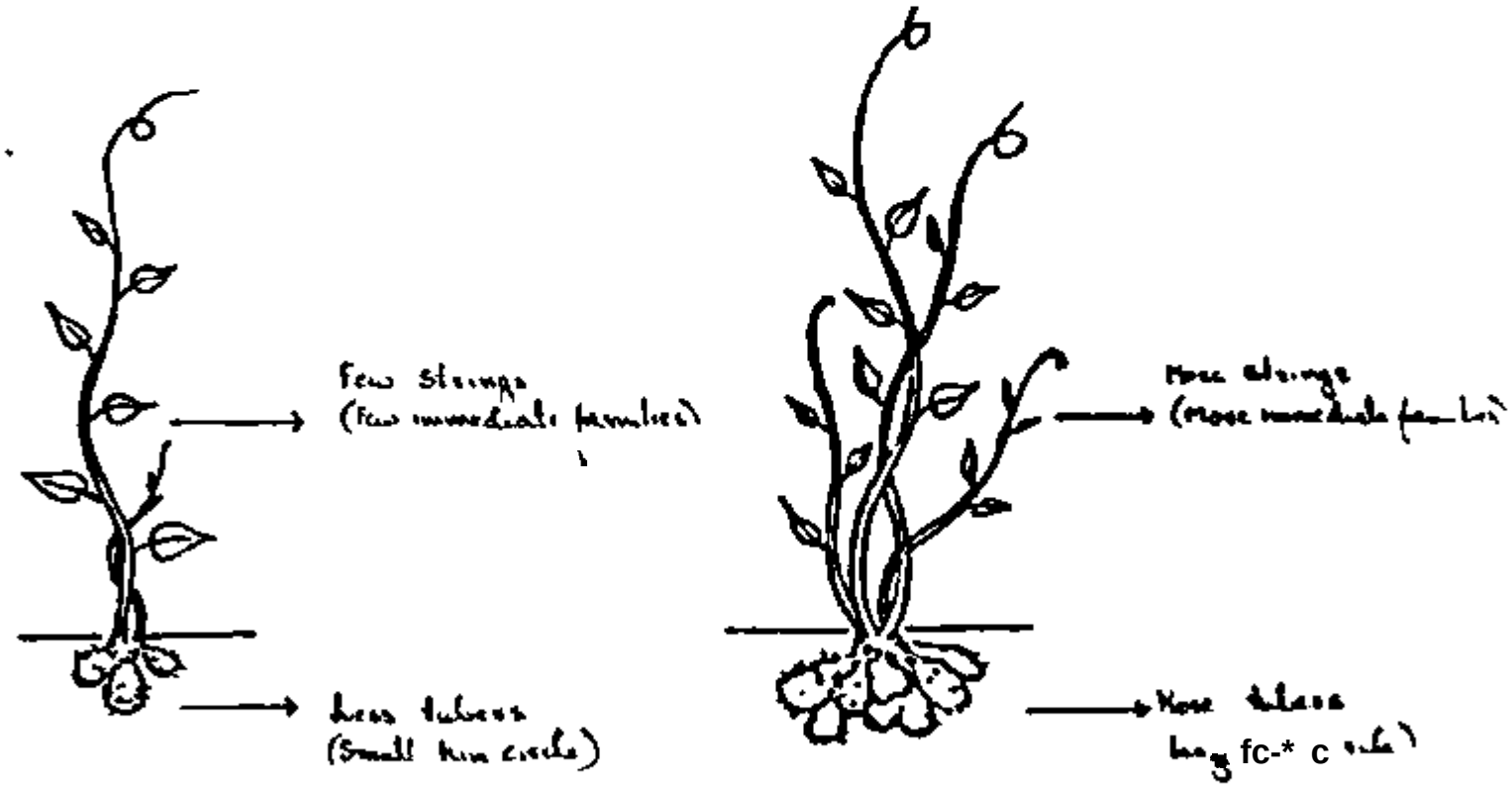

Fig 6.11 Analogy of *Saval* plant and family relations

Mudugas are monogamous in the sense that every person keeps only one partner at a time and instances of both polyandry and polygyny are absent. Similarly cases of sororate and levirate marriages are noticed very rarely. However, divorce and remarriages of both partners have always been observed among the Mudugas.

Marriage pattern and procedure :

Unlike the traditional form of Muduga marital union which is devoid of marriage ceremony, nowadays marriages are accompanied by formal rituals, ceremonies, and feasts A suitable girl from a known and acceptable kin group having been determined, the parents of the boy make a formal proposal through a close relative to the girl's parents After that, the boy's parents and close agnates visit the girl's house with one or two elderly members of the hamlet, usually *bandari or kuruthala* as third men (*moonathavan/ jathi*) The bride's group will not agree to the proposal immediately, instead they reply that opinion regarding this will be informed later after consulting their close relatives

The responsible elders of the girl's hamlet like *moopan, kuruthala* and *bandan* are kept informed about the proposal The final decision for the acceptance of the proposal rests with the girls parents and close agnates, though other elder members in the hamlet are consulted and suggestions sought Later, from the girl's house, her parents and one or two close relatives visit groom's house to see the groom Meanwhile, in the girl's hamlet, the proposed girl's age-mates will get to know her opinion whether the is willing for this alliance When the proposal has been accepted, the boy** close agnates along with *moopan, bandan or kuruthala* of the boy** hamlet goes to the girl's house to fix the marriage date Though the final decision in a marriage negotiation vests with the immediate family, the close agnatic kin and the hamlet members (*oorukarar*) are nonetheless seen to be participating in the various stages of discussion to clinch the alliance Leach thus while writing about the Kachins, very apt > says " the corporate group of persons who have the most decisive say in bringing about an arranged marriage is always a group of coresident males " (1961 - 56)

On the fixed Sunday[3] afternoon, the boy*s parents with a group of relatives along with the elders of the hamlet like *moopan* and *bandari* or *kuruthala* as third man visit the

bnde's hamlet, where they will be given a warm welcome. The groom's party which stays ov ernighl is given high hospitality by the bride's people. Food will be prepared and is served for all the people who have assembled there and other members of the hamlet. On the following day, i.e., on Monday, the groom's party moves back to their hamlet along with the bride and her relatives. This event of bringing of bnde to the groom's hamlet is called as *pennukootti baruntthathu*.

After reaching the groom's hamlet, the bride goes to the priest-house (*per koora*) and offers prayer. An important ceremonial act of the bnde after reaching the groom's hamlet is to fetch water from the nearby stream. The bnde after offering prayer, goes and fetch a pot of water from the stream for her mother-in-law. The groom's sister (*attiai*) accompanies the bnde when she goes to fetch water. This ceremony known as *thannikku pokirathu* (fetching of water) symbolises the transfer of her Labour potential from her natal household to the one w here she will live henceforth for her life.

The bnde's party stays overnight at the groom's hamlet Food will be prepared in the groom's hut and is distributed to all the people armed and other members of the hamlet On the next day, i c , on Tuesday after the feasting is over, the major part of the marriage ceremony - the bride-price giving (*pariya-panam kettirathu*), is held. The *pariya-panam* is collected through a *panchayath* consisting of the hamlet's council members and other elder members of both the party. The groom's father first keeps an 'initial amount' in the *panchayath* This is called the *muthal panam* After that all the relatives of the groom especially his agnates who ha\c gathered there contribute money depending on their ability towards the bride-price From thus money, an amount is car marked as *pariya-panam* by the *panchayath* The bride-groom's *jathi* tales the bride-price from the *panchayath* and hands it over to the bndc s *jathi* The bride's *jathi* gives the amount to the bnde and she finally presents it to her father The remaining money is distnbuted equally among the *panchayath* members.

In a later stage, the bnde's relatives will give cattle or goats, vessels and other households utensils etc., as counter prestation to the groom** household which is known as *seedhanam*. It is significant to note that only a cow or female goats are prevented as *seedhanam*, since it gives birth to young ones and keep multiplying, and the couple can

lead a comfortable life depending on them- This female cattle represents the nucleus for a future herd.

After about one week, on a Monday, the bride and the groom make their first visit to the bnde's hut. They take with them the goods given by the groom's parents as gift to the bnde's parents These goods include ten liters of rice and other household provisions like coconut, onion, dhal, coriander, chilly, etc. The couple stay in the bride's hamlet for about one week. Food prepared out of the provisions brought by them is distributed to their relatives in the hamlet. During their stay in the bride's hamlet, the couple will be send together to work in their farmland and one or two days later close relatives will visit the field where they are working so as to see the groom's ability to work in the field-

When the couple returns to the groom's house, the bride's father also send with his daughter the same amount of goods as gifts for the groom's parents with which a counter feast is given to the relatives in the groom's hamlet To emphasize the new union between the two families, a long senes of visits by the newly married couple accompanied by gifts alternating between the groom's hamlet and the bride's take place The chain of gifts that are exchanged, as Dumont says, symbolizes the alliance tie which constitute the most important feature of mamage ceremonies from the point of view of the relation between the two families (Dumont : 1957)

Dunng the initial phase of the mamage, the boy and the girl is obliged to spend more time in the bndes place working in his parents-in-law's farmland and assisting them in other economic activities After this, they permanently settle in the groom's hamlet and erect a new hut nearby his parent's, and start their independent household

Two cases of mamage ceremonies will be presented here so as to clearly bring into picture the vanous ntuals and e\ents occurring dunng a formally held marriage ceremon>. The first one is that of Mani's mamage at Mele-Abbannoor which is a typical case of mamage ceremony held between members of two different hamlets. The second is that of Murugan's mamage with Pavashi at Thaze-Abbannoor which is a case of mamage ceremony held between members of same hamlet.

Case 1. At Mele-Abbannoor, Chekidan's son Mani's mamage with his mother s brother's daughter from Thadikandu *oorai* was held in the month of March, 1997 Chekidan and his wife had initiated the proposal few years back and son the consent o

his wife's brother Mathan who had agreed lo give his daughier in marriage to his sisJer's son.

On the proposed Sunday afternoon the groom's parents with a group of relatives accompanied by the *bandari* of the hamlet as *jathi* went to the bride's hamlet. The groom's party was given a warm welcome and they stayed overnight in the bride's hamlet Food was specially prepared and was served to all the people who have assembled there. On Monday afternoon the groom's party came back to their hamlet along with the bride and her relatives. This is called *pennu kootti barunthathu*. A *panthal* was erected in Front of the groom's hut using bamboo and c>cas lea\e$. The bride's party stayed overnight at the groom's hamlet Food was prepared in the groom's hut and was served to all the people who had gathered there. The bnde took rest in the groom's hut and she was accompanied by her mother, sisters and also the groom's sister

On Tuesday morning, the groom and the bndc along with few other relatives went to the *mannukaran's* hut *(pet koorai)* and offered prayer to the *karudaiyam* (Since Chekidan and his close relatives were staying away from the main hamlet, this offering of prayer was not done on the previous day)

On Tuesday afternoon, food was served to the entire relatives who ha\c gathered in the hamlet After the feasting, the main event of the marriage ceremony, 1 e, the *panchayath*, was held for the payment of bride-price (*pariya-panamkettirathu*) The main person heading the *panchayath* will be the *jathi* from the groom's side Chekidan's sister's husband Ramaswami who is a resident of Mele-Abbannoor took the role of the groom's jathi (aan-jathi) [4] The groom's *jathi* then spread a mat in the centre of the *panthal* in the east-west direction and kept Rs I '. as *dakshina* at the centre of the mat Then the *moopan* and *mannukaran* of the hamlet, both the groom s and bndc s father. and other elder members of both the party including the *jathi of* the bnde s side (*pennu-jathi)* sat in a circle on the mat for the *pancha ark* Before fining *for* the *pancha ath*, the *mannukaran* has to keep Rs I '. and the *moopan* also should keep Rs 1 « as the hamlet mone> (*ooru pathu kudipanam*). All the other relatives will gather around the *panchayath* so as to w atch the proceedings and also to participate in it.

The groom's father then kept Rs. I '. and after that a plate containing betel leaves, betel nuts, beedi, and tobacco mas also kept in the *mac of* the mat He also

placed an amount of money as *pakkala panam*[5] towards the bride-price. The groom's *jathi* will formally enquire the groom's and bride's party about the reason for the *panchay ath*. After getting reply from the groom's father, the *jathi* asked the bride-price they are expecting. Discussions regarding the bride-price along with arguments and counter-arguments will carry on between the two parties beaded by the groom's *jathi* symbolising the bride as cow and the groom as bull.[6]

The main dialogues made in the *panchay ath* while discussing on the *parnya-panam* is as follows :

grooms *jathi* : *nimma eenku enthuku bantheru...?*

(why you have assembled here...?)

bride's party *enima ee oorukku maadu kootti bantheru...*

(we have come with a cow for your hamlet)

groom's *jathi maadukku enna beta..?*

(what is the price of the cow)

bride's party *munnooru___*

(Three hundred)

groom's *jathi ithu banthu enna kanakku...?*

(on what basis it costs so much price ..?)

bride's party *thadikundilunallapullirikku athu thinthu maadu nalla kolithiru-kkutm*

(at Thadikundu there are vast areas of thick grass lands eating this fresh green grass, the cow is fully grown up and it cost a lot)

groom's *jathi maadukku nalla paalirikkutha* .?

(whether the cow gives sufficient milk ..?)

bnde's party *nalamaayi noodi mescha nalla pal kedakkum*

(If >ou care for it and feed them well, it gives good amount of milk)

Simultaneously with the discussion, the bride-price collection had started and the groom's *jathi* was seen inviting all the relatives who have gathered there to come and contribute an amount towards the bride-price Coctribction will be nude not only by the agnates of the groom, but also by the affines. The *jathi* will call aloud, " *anna-thampi ...macha-mama. pettapillai..*come forward and keep your contribution'" The money was collected in three separate sets –*anna-thampi panam macha-mamapanam* and *petta-*

pillai panam. The agnates of the hamlet contributed money as *anna-thampipanam* and the affines made their contribution in the *macha-maman* set. The 'sisters' and 'daughters' of the hamlet who were married out placed their money in the *petta-pillai* set.

While the bride-price collection was going on, it was clearly evident that the agnates and the affines compete with each other in raising the contribution. The *jathi* will keep on counting the amount so far collected in the two sets and will make the people enthusiastic and encourage for more contribution.

After the collection was over, the *macha-maman panam* and the *petta-pillai panam* was put together. The *pakkala panam* kept by the groom's father was added to the *anna-thampi panam* and this amount was used for the bride-price payment. The *jathi* then counted the full amount collected. Around Rs.350 was collected and Rs.251 *V** was decided to be payed as *panya-panam*. Then the *panya-panam* was taken by the groom's *jatfu.* and was handed over to the bride's *jathi* by saying; "this is the money of the *pallimakkal* (descedents of Palli ancestor)... do not think that we arc giving only this, more will be given later."

Then the bride and the groom carnc and sat in the *panchayath*. The bride's *jathi* then ga\e the money to the bride saying, "*ithu ninnu panam . ithu banki mnnu appanthu kaikku kodu*" (this is your price, take it and give it to your father). She received the money and touched the feet of the *jatht* and gave the money to her father's hand and touched his feet. While receiving the money, tears came out from Mathan's eyes. After blessing his daughter by touching her forehead he uttered these words to her "*ithu ninnu pennu panam ithu naanu bankire* (this is your bride-price, I am receiving this)

aanal nee intu muthal ninnu alanthu koode n nnu mami mamanthu koode nalamaay irunthu kollu .

(from today onwards you should live peaceful!) with your husband, mother in-law and father-in-law)

ninnu mamano mamiyo atti a n acha enthu son 3 um en hu sandep J tha n maranthu kalay adorn onnum nenjilbekkaruthu

(even if your *maniam mami attiaor machan* quarrels with you, please forget it do not keep it in your heart.)

..*nee eenku nalamayi irikkadom*(you should lead a good life here).

ithanyum naalu naan ninne nalamayi balarthine__HI ninnu nadappu kaaranam enakko ennu oorukarkko cheetha peru barakooda"...

(till now I have looked after you well...now lead a good life and do not bring bad name to me or my hamlet).

After this, the groom's father also declared to the *panchayath* and others who ha\ e assembled there that he had given the bride-price for his son and assured that He will lake care of the girl from then onwards. Then the bride was asked to pay Rs.10 ' 4 to her mother's brother She gave the money given by her father to her mother's brother and touched his feet The groom also paid Rs 10 '4 to his mother's brother (who is also the bride's father) and Rs 2 *V** to his father's sister's husband Ramaswami By this, the marriage ritual was over' and the *panchayath* came to an end, and all who sal for the *panchayath* got up after which the ntual of 'taking back the mat* was done This is known as "*ezhu peru solli edukkirathu*" For this, the bride's father and the groom's father kept Rs 1 *V** each on the mat which shows that the *panchayath* is over and 'seven people' were witness for this *panchayath* This money goes to the groom's *jathi* and he folds the mat

The *macha-mamian panam* and *petta pillai panam* was distributed equally among all the members who sat for the *panchayath* The remaining money was used for paying the *ooru panam* This is a small amount given to any one member of other outside hamlet as a token for representing their hamlet in the marriage function After the *pariya-panam* payment was over, the relatives gathered there for the marriage started dispersing, and the bride's relatives, except few, returned to the r hamlet With this the marriage ceremony came to an end

Case 2 Thaze-Abbannoor, Chellan's son Marugan's marriage with Kakki's daugher Pavashi of the same settlement, who is also Murugan's MBD, was decided to be held in the last week of March. 1997 Few years back itself both the famu lies have expressed their w llhngness and had reached an agreement to gel Murugan and Pa\ ashi mimed

On the proposed Sunday, *pan hal* was erected infront of both the brade s and the groom's hut. Close relatives from nearby ham et started reaching Thaze-Abbannoor by Sunday afternoon itself On Sunday evening, food was prepared at the brides but and was distributed to the entire hamlet. Since it is the ob gation and duty of the affines, the

cooking and serving of food was done by the affines of the bride's group who are residents of the hamlet. Thus the groom himself, his elder brother Panali, groom's father chellan, Kakki's classificatory sister's son Rangan, etc., worked as *mappilakal* for the bnde's people. Since the bride and the groom were from the same hamlet, this symbolized the feast given for the groom's party who had arrived at the bride's hamlet to take her to the groom's hamlet. It is to be mentioned here that most of the evexits in the ceremony were *enacted* by the people to show that the marriage took place between members of two different hamlets.

On Monday afternoon, the *jathi* of the groom with a stick in one hand and holding an umbrella, along with two other relatives of the groom, proceeded from the groom's but to the bride's hut They enacted as if they came with a proposal and made a formal enquiry to the bride's parents for their daughter The bnde's parents did not agree to the proposal immediately and instead replied that their decision will be informed later The groom's *jathi* again made a visit for the second time to the bnde's hut to know their opinion regarding the proposal At this time, the bnde's parents and relatives expressed their willingness to give their daughter, but were not ready to tend their daughter with them that time The groom's *jathi* returns to the groom'* hut and informs them about the decision of the bride's relatives. The next time, the groom's *jathi* along with the groom, his parents and other relatives proceeded to the bride's hut This visit symbolizes the going of groom's party to the bnde's hamlet to bring the bndc The groom's relatives will be invited inside the bnde's hut and a final agreement is reached

The bnde and the groom offered prayer to the *karudaivam* in the priest-house and after that they both got blessings from the bnde's parents The groom s party along with the bnde and the bnde's relatives then proceeded to the groom's hut They made a long procession throughout the hamlet and reached the groom's hut where they were received with warm welcome During the procession, the groom s brother in-law (sister's husband) holds umbrella for the bnde The bode and the groom were invited to the inner room of the hut and they offered prayer to the *karudaivam* This procession represents the ev ent *of pennu kooti varunthathu* i.e., bringing the bride to the groom s hamlet. After this, food was served to all the people who have gathered for the marriage

The affines of the groom's party, especially their son-in-laws actively engaged in the preparation and serving of food.

On Tuesday afternoon, *panchayath* meeting for arranging the bride-price payment, which is the major event of the marriage, mas held. For this, the *bandari* of the hamlet (who did the role of groom's *jathi)* spread a mat in the *pandal* erected in front of the groom's hut The mat was spread in the east-west direction and he placed Rs.1 '* as *dakshnia*. Then the groom's father placed his *dakshina* along with a plate containing betel leaves, betel nuts, tobacco, beedi, etc. After this, the *moopan* of the hamlet and other elder members sat for the *panchayath.* The *moopan* also placed Rs. 1 '# as *dakshma* on behalf of the hamlet. Then groom's father placed two *pakkala panam* hundred rupees each, in the *panchayath,* one for the groom's bnde price and the other for groom's elder brother Panali's bride price. The bnde's father also placed a *pakkala panam* to pay the bride-price of his earlier wife who is the mother of the bride. Since Pavashi's mother's *panya-panam* was not yet paid, Kakki was not having the nght to receive the *party a-panam* of his daughter

Later, the *bandan* called aloud and invited all the relatives gathered there to come forward and contribute their share towards the *party a-panam Macha maman panam* and *petta-pillai panam* of both the groom and his brother was collected together. After the *panya-panam* collection was over, the *jathi* counted the entire money collected in the *panchayath.* An amount of Rs. 225 *V** was earmarked as the *partya-panam* for Kakki's wife Chathi (Rs 51 *V** was earlier paid towards the *partyapanam* of chathi). The groom's *jathi* gave the money to the bride's *jathi* and he gave it to Chathi and the inturn handed it o\er to her elder brother Kaden Before receiving the *partyupanam* , Chathi's brother placed Rs 1 *V** as *daskhina* to the *panchayath* Then Pariah's wife was called to the *panchayath* and Rs.225 *V** was given to her b> the *jath* as her price She then gave it to her father Ooshi. After this, Pavashi was called and Rs. 225 . was given to her by the bride's *jathi* and she handed it over to her father Kakki

Thus in a single *panchayath* , three bride-price payments were made simultaneously. The remaining amount of money was distributed equally among the members who sat for the *panchayath Ooru panam* was also given to relative* who

represented the outside hamlet. After the *panchayath*, food was served to all those who attended the marnage. This concludes the ceremonial aspect of the marriage.

Traditional system of marriage :

The marri age system practiced by the Mudugas in the past had a different procedure than what is being done now. In olden times among the Mudugas, marriage is usually marled by the absence of ceremonies or rituals. If a marital union is accompanied by formal ritual, ceremonies, feast and bride-price payment, then it can be called a marriage ceremony in the formal sense and the Mudugas refer to it as *kalyanam*. In traditional context, the Mudugas hardly employ a term for marriage ceremony as such. The often used term *pennu edukkirathu* (to take a girl) refers to the marriage union. Even now-a-days among the Mudugas, most marriages are devoid of major ceremonies and rituals. At Thaze-Abbannoor, out of a total of 75 marriages recorded from 45 couples and 18 widow / widower, 70 marnage unions were held without any formal ceremonies, and only 5 unions were formally arranged with rituals and ceremonies accompanied by feasts and immediate bride-price payments

According to them, when a man and a woman starts living together and share their labour and co-operate in household activities, their marri ed life starts There is no event which bridges pre-and post marnage statuses. The crucial elements arc the pragmatic interplay between duration, fertility, bride-price payments and community recognition Marnage crystallize as time passes, children and other indices accumulate bnde wealth is given and the community recognizes the raarnagt and the couple so presents themselves to the community.

As the woman becomes progressively assimilated int the man's fam ly and establishes herself as a wife and hard worker, the marriage begins to crystallize Marty years after the marnage, dunng any occasi n, sometimes at the time of their children's marriage or at the time of either of the spouse's funeral, the bnde price wi 1 be paid Before the payment of bride-price itself the people acknow ed e the union They recognize it as a marriage. People recognize that a couple may be roamed ev en if bride price has never changed hands. And, even if bride price is paid, it is not until the couple have produced children that the raamagt makes root Thus among the Mudugas the

purpose of bride-price is not mainly to legitimize the conjugal relation. Rather, it is the conjugal relation and the birth of the children which legitimizes payment of bride-price.

In olden days there was the custom of bride-service (*pennu vela*) among the Mudugas Marriage was by means of rendering service to the bride's parents. The boy. if accepted by the girl's father, had to offer service for him by working for about 2-4 years This is a period during which a prospective groom provides labour service to the family of the bride inorder to marry her.[9] It usually involves a period of uxorilocal residence. There is a prior agreement between the two families, and when the boy reaches maturity and is capable of doing labour, he goes to the bride's parent (usually his MB or FZ) and reside along with them to work in their farm land and to assist them in other economic activities. In some cases, the boy should also do service for his parents-in-law's close kin residing nearby assisting them in their agricultural activities, and try to be in more cordial relation with them

During this penod, he stays along with the bride's parents in their hut and his prospective mother-in-law cooks food for him But in a later stage, if he could win the consent of the girl and is willing to live with him, she starts accompanying him to the farm land and assist in agricultural activities In due course, they both start living together and he erects a new hut nearby his wife's parent's and start an independent household staying uxorilocally. He clears separate field and both the husband and wife share their labour in cultivation. However, he continues to assist his wife's parents, maintain frequent interaction with their household, and share food with them After a penod of 3 or 4 years, he returns with his wife to his natal hamlet to live along with his agnates

However, there are instances wheTe the wife's father forces the son in Law to reside in his hamlet and co-operate with them in their agricultural activities f r a long penod Thus he continues to reside uxorilocal y in his wife s hamlet as long as *he* receives co-operation from his affines There are also instances where the brides father if having large number of cattle's and other property or if he is having no sons to look after them, forces the son-in-law to reside in his hamlet taking care of his cattle and field and assisting in other activities for a penod of time Among the Mudugas, it is the privilege

of a father-in-law or a mother's brother to get any amount of service fiwn their son-in-law / sister's son.

Case: Mandi of Thaze-Abbannoor had married Chellan's sister from Boodar hamlet- Later, Mandi's son Ooshi was proposed to marry his mother's brother's daughter from Boodar. Since his mother's brother Chellan kept plenty of cattle and had large farmland, he wanted his prospective son-in-law to stay along with him after marriage, and to take care of his cattle and the farm land. Chellan also assured that he will be given few cattle and also land for cultivation. But Ooshi could not agree to this demand since he had to look after his younger siblings and his aged mother. Even though both the families agreed for the marriage, Ooshi did not go and reside along with his mother's brother. Later, after few years when his younger brother Kali become matured, Ooshi forced him to marry Chellan's daughter. As instructed by his elder brother, Kali married Chellan's daughter and stayed uxorilocally along with his mother's brother assisting him in agricultural and other economic activities

The custom of bride-service is not practiced as such among the Mudugas now-a-days as it was in olden days. However, traces of it could be observed in such practices where the son-in-law is obliged to visit his wife's hamlet and help his parents-in-law whenever they are in need. After marriage, the bndc and the groom arc often seen making frequent visits to the bride's parent's place and will assist them in their farm work If they are from nearby hamlets, the son-in-law at times visits his wife s parents with one or two bundles of fire-»ood or come and work in their fields whenever needed. Panli's son Murugan of Thaze-Abbannoor has married Vella's daughter from Thadikundu hamlet After marriage, Murugan and his wife were seen often going to Thadikundu to help his parents-in-law and to assist them in their cultiv They use to stay for w eeks together at Thadikundu and come back when the work is ov er

Though the traditional system of marital union through bndc service is not observed among the Mudugas at present, it should be mentioned here that o c n now there are cases of marriage unions without formal ceremonies and rituals either Thus there is a transitional stage in the process of change in Muduga mantai union which lacks the old custom of bride service and at the same time devoid of formal ceremonies and rituals. After the negotiation between the respectiv e families are been carried out, the boy and the

girl are free to start their marital life at anytime. Once the two kin groups arrive at a mutual agreement regarding the alliance, it marks the early phase of a marriage. If the bride and groom are from the same hamlet, it is often noted that a close interaction between the two households slowly starts. They begin to enter in the mutual exchange of labour and food. The bride often visits the groom's hut and assist her mother-in-law (*mami*) and sister-in-law (*attiai*) in household activities and other minor labours. She may eat from her in-law's hut and get *beethe* share of her family members. Nevertheless, during this stage, the girl tries to avoid the boy and will not sit with him or talk to him in the presence of others. Later, the girl begins residing in the groom's hut along with his parents By now, both the bride and the groom start moving together and co-operate in agricultural activities. They together clear a separate field and start their independent cultivation. The next phase of the marriage *is* when the man erects a separate hut and starts their independent domestic unit. However, they maintain close interaction and exchange food and labour with his parent's household As time passes, the marriage solidifies and after the birth of children, the community recognizes the relationship and accepts them Years after during the occasion of their children's mamagc or any other suitable time when a *panchayath (kalam)*[10] is held, the husband and his agnates arrange the payment of the bride-price towards his wife's group This socially marks the transfer of nght over the children and the claim on his wife's bone after her death.

Case At Thazcabbannoor, Chathan's daughter Mathi was proposed for marriage with Neeli's son Raju a few years before. From then onwards the two families had very close interaction and frequent exchange of food. Mathi used to visit Neeli's hut very often and help Neeli and her daughter Pavashi in household activities or other farm work However, she was reluctant in moving with her prospective husband and avoided talking to him or sitting with him in the presence of others. Both Raju and Mathi were getting a share of e\erung meal from each other's hut daily Though Mathi spend most of the day time at Neeli's hut, helping her in household activities, both Raju and Mathi were not living together. At night Mathi slept to her own hut. But later in May 1996, when Raju was affected by heavy fever and was suffering from severe body pain, Mathi was asked to take care of him. Thus fôr the first time she spent the night along with Raju in a

separate hut preparing medicines and nursing him. From thai day onwards they started living together which marked the beginning of their marital fife.

This kind of marital union without formal cereniones will also occur between members living in different hamlets. Once both the families express their willingness for the alliance, on any day according to their convenience, the boy or his parents bring the bride to their hamlet without any formal ceremony. Thus al Thaze-Abbannoor, Panali was very much interested in taking Vella's daughter from Thadikundu hamlet for his son Murugan Since Panali had stayed with *Yds* family al Thadikunda for a longer period, they were having prior connections with that hamlet. Once the families have expressed their willingness for the marital union, Murugan's visit to Thadikundu became frequent and he used to stay for weeks at Thadikundu. During that time he stayed along with Vella's family, worked for them and at the same time developed intimacy with the girl Later, when Murugan returned to Thaze-Abbannoor, he came along with his wife and stayed for few weeks with his parents. This marked the initial phase of their mamed life and there was no other formal ceremony or ritual for the mamage

In olden times, there were also instances of marriage by elopement or by capture The main reason for such type of mamage was due to the personal liking of the boy and girl to marry going against the wish of their parents and close relatives. Such a mamage also used to take place when forcible abduction of a girl occur without making due payment of bride-price In this type of mamage, the girl used to elope with the boy or forcibly taken by him to a nearby forest or a distant relative's hamlet where thev spend a few months of lonely and secret life By that time, their parents come to know about the happening and having no other options, but to agree with the couples. How ever it s to be mentioned here that, this type of mamage ts not socially sanctioned or permitted and is treated illegal by the society Both the boy's and girl's family is obliged lo pay an amount as fine towards the members of the *panchayath* The attitude of the people towards mamage by elopement can be clearly revealed by a case from Thaze-Abbannoor

At Thazeabbannoor, Kaden's son Ramaswami had eloped with Chathan *t* daughter Karimi who had been divorced by Chellan of Mele-Abbannoor After few months when the situation became calm, both of them returned to the hamlet and settled along with his kinsmen. Later. when Ramaswami expired and *panchayath.* was held for

bridc-pnce collcclioru Kadcn apologized before the *panchayath* for his son's mistake of eloping (*eduthodirathu*) with Karimi. and he himself kept Rs. 50 ¼ as fine towards the *panchayath.* But *moopan* and the elder members of the *panchayath* hesitate to receive the money as fine. However, Kadcn explained that he is paying the money as a punishment for his son's mistake (*thappu*) so as to avoid this type of mistakes in future among the *oorukarar.*

When two families of the same hamlet arrive at an informal agreement to marry their children. it is usual among the Mudugas that the interaction between the two families become more close. The boy or his family starts offering gifts to the girl's family in the form of provisions like rice, oil, chilly, salt, etc., or to the proposed girl with items like soap, sweet, bangles, etc. This gift giving is not frequent and is made now and then until the marriage is held or the boy and girl start living together. However, it should not be concluded that these close interaction and gift giving will always lead to marital union A case in support of this is of Nanjan's son Velli's marriage proposal

Nanjan of Thaze-Abbannoor and his wife Beere had an idea of taking Chathan and Malli's daughter Mathi of the same hamlet as wife for their son Velli Moreover, Velli also liked Malhi very much. Nanjan and his relatives did not make any formal proposal to Mathi's family, but as a mark of their willingness for an alliance, his family started *becthe* relationship with Math's household. They accepted this and for few months they continued this *beethe* relation When Mathi attained puberty. Nan an's family gave a bag of provisions as gift to Malli's household It was Vclli himself who handed over the gift, which contained rice, dhal, chilly, salt, oil, soap, bangles, etc However, Malli was not at all i nterest ed in giving her daughter to Nanjan's family and later when she realized that Nanjan's family is bend upon taking Mathi, she expressed her disinterest in this union saying that they have already decided t g \c Mathi in marriage to her brother's son Raju

Thus the relationship between the two families got strained, and the *beethe* exchange was also stopped. However after one year, when Mathi's younger sisteNanji attained pubcrt>. Malli approached Nan an and his wife and agreed to give Nanj for Velli Nanjan 's family also accepted it since they w anted to renew their relationship with Malli's family. But Velli was not at a i erested in this new proposal to marry Nanji

and he was against his parent's decision in renewing the relationship with Malli's family. According to Velli, they did not give the girt whom he wished to marry, and now no other girl from their family could substitute that union.

Bride-price and its mode of transaction :

Among the Mudugas. bride-price is viewed as a transfer of money made between descent groups which symbolizes the alienation of various kinds of rights in a woman and the children to her husband and his kin. In the course of these transfer of bnde-pnce and exchange of women, as Comaroff says, "these units create relationships of affinity and debt with each other, affirming their own internal solidarity and mutual interests in the process" (1980 : 15) Bnde-pnce payment is an alternative form of bnde-service When the practice of bride-service is declining, it automatically reflects in an increase in the amount of bnde-pnce Thus dunng olden time when there was the practice of marriage by bride-service, the amount ofbride-price paid was negligibly less, amounting to Rs 2¼ , 5¼ or 7¼ Now-a-days, among the Mudugas, bride-service is very rarely practiced and there is seen an increase in bnde-pnce to around Rs 251'. But when considering the declining money value over the years, this can not be concluded as a drastic increase However, the idea that the custom of bride-service has been declining among the Mudugas remains a fact

It is noted that bride-service involves a transfer from one individual usually over a fairly long penod of time, whereas bnde-pnce payment typically involves mob lization of the entire members of the km group to make an acceptable marriage pa> ment Among the Mudugas, often noted is the practice of a dalayed bride-price payment which is delivered in a senes of installments at different sues trom the time of marriage the dry-funeral ceremony, which is considered as the last stage for payment. Out of a survey of 75 marriages at Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet, it is found that bride-price payments were not yet made in about 37 marriages- In the remaining marriages where transaction is made, full payment is made only for 31 marriages and in 7 unions, bride-price is half paid The survey also shows that formal marriages were held and bride-pricepayment were initially paid in only 5 cases.

There arc different stages in the life of a man where he can make the bride-price payment of his wife. If the marital union is marked by a formal ceremony, the bride-price will be paid at the initial stage itself. Here, payment of bride-price will be a major event of the marriage ceremony. The *pariyam* (short form of *pariya-panam*, bride-price) is collected through a *panchayath* held by the council members and other elder members of the hamlet. The next stage of bride-price payment will be during the occasion of a marriage ceremony of any close relative of the husband or any other function during which a *panchayath (kalam)* is held for the collection of *pariya-panam*. Thus it is seen that during the bnde-price payment of a younger brother, usually the elder brother's balance payment if any, will also be paid in that *panchayath* to their respectne descent group members In certain cases, a father's pari yam will also be paid along with the children's panyam (see the case of Kakki's bride-price payment at Thaze-Abbannoor described abo\ e)

The last compensation payment a man usually makes during his life is when he 'buys the bone' of his wife Such payments are not usually paid if bndc-pnee is already paid But how ever, if prior payment is not made, the payment made at the time of death signifies the bride-price payment, bone-price and the nght o\er the children Ev en if full bride-price payment was already made, a small payment called *bazhi-panam* has to be made at the time of death towards the wife's agnates as a token of assimilating the wife into her husband's clan

Among the Mudugas, in most cases* the bnde-pnee payment will be made at the time of the death of either of the spouses Dunng this ume it is compulsory that the *pariyam* should be fully cleared, failing which the husband cannot claim right in the woman's body and bone and also nght over uV child en In ccruin cases, if the husband dies pnor to the wife, then it is the obl ga[illegible] of his c ose ki[illegible] to pay the *par urn* t the wife's kin group, otherwise, they will ob ect to carry out the buria The wives grou, w argue out for the bride-price of their women Equat[illegible] their woman with a plantain, they argue in the *panchayath* saying, "*ennu baga mundene kondu bannu ninnu mannukku nattine. Athuku naalt pah mulathithu E [illegible] in kittale Ana en u baga maravum paliyum nanu eduthupome Allande ponal enn panam enakku tharad*

The literal meaning of these words is that, ~ a plantain has been taken from our hamlet

and was planted in your land, which later produced many seedlings. But till now you have not paid us anything. If you are not paying, we will take back oar plantain and seedlings to our natal land".[11] However, in almost all cases, the agnates who have assembled in the hamlet for the funeral ceremony will contribute an amount to the *panchayath* and the collected money will be paid to the wife's kin as *pariya-panam*

(1) Marital union with formal ceremony

A	B	C
(Marital union starts) First bride-price payment	During the occasion of close relatives bride-price payment	Death of either of the spouse	Seeru festival

A	B	C
Marital union starts	Occasion of close relatives bride-price payment	Death of either of the spouse	Seeru festival

(2) Marital union without formal marriage ceremony

Fig 6 12 Stages of bride-price payment

Yet, in rare cases, *pariyam* will be made to pay during the dry-funeral ceremony which is called the *seeru* or *barasavu* This is considered as the final stage (*kadeshi kattam*) for the payment of the bride-price Thus if the bride-price is not being full) paid at the funeral ceremony, then the bride's relatives would warn the husband's group saying, "*pariyamemma ellilu bankilamma*", which means that the bride-price will be taken from them during the *barasavu*(dry-funeral). Even if the bride-price is not being paid at this time, the woman's bone will not be allowed to keep in the sacred rock cave *gobbe* for the second burial However, there are no cases of people resisting to pay the balance bride-price during the dry-funeral

It is the father who is having the sole responsibility to pay the bride-price for his son. But in the absence of the father, it is usually the elder brother mho is obliged fto male the bride-pnee payment for his younger brother Similar v s son is obliged to pa the bride-pnee of his father if any balance is remaining at the time of his father s death

And, a younger brother will have to pay the bride-price for his elder brother if he has not paid it fully during his life time. In rare cases, a grand-son will also pay the bride-price for his father's father if it has not been paid-

in the same way, a father is having the right to claim the bride-price of Ins daughter But in his absence, his son is having the right over the bride-price of his sister. In certain cases, if brother is also absent, it is the brother's son who is having the ultimate right to claim his father's sister's bride-price from his father's sister's husband's kin. In rare cases, a grand-son will be getting the nght to claim the bride-price of his father's father's sister Table 4.2 shows the number of cases where bride-price is given and received by the male members of Thaze-Abbannoor hamlet.

Table 6 2 Bnde price paid and received by the male members of Thaze-Abbannoor

Bnde price paid

FFF	FFyB	FF	F	FcB	F>B	FBS	cB	>B	MZS	S	wife
2	5	3	14	8	11	5	8	9	1	9	11

Bnde price received

FFZ	FZ	cZ	yZ	D	FDD	BD	"SD"
1	16	13	24	9	13	9	1

Out of the total of 48 married males from whom data has *been* collected, it is found that in 37 cases the bride-price of a sister (including classificatory sister) has been received by brother's in 9 cases duaghter's *parnam* is received bv her father and in 16 cases a father's sister's *parnam* has been received b> father s son. From the table it is evident that in 11 cases wife's bride-price has been paid by husband, aad in 14 casts mother's by son. In 19 cases father's brother's wife s bride price paid by husband s brother's son, and son's bndc price has been paid by father in 9 cases.

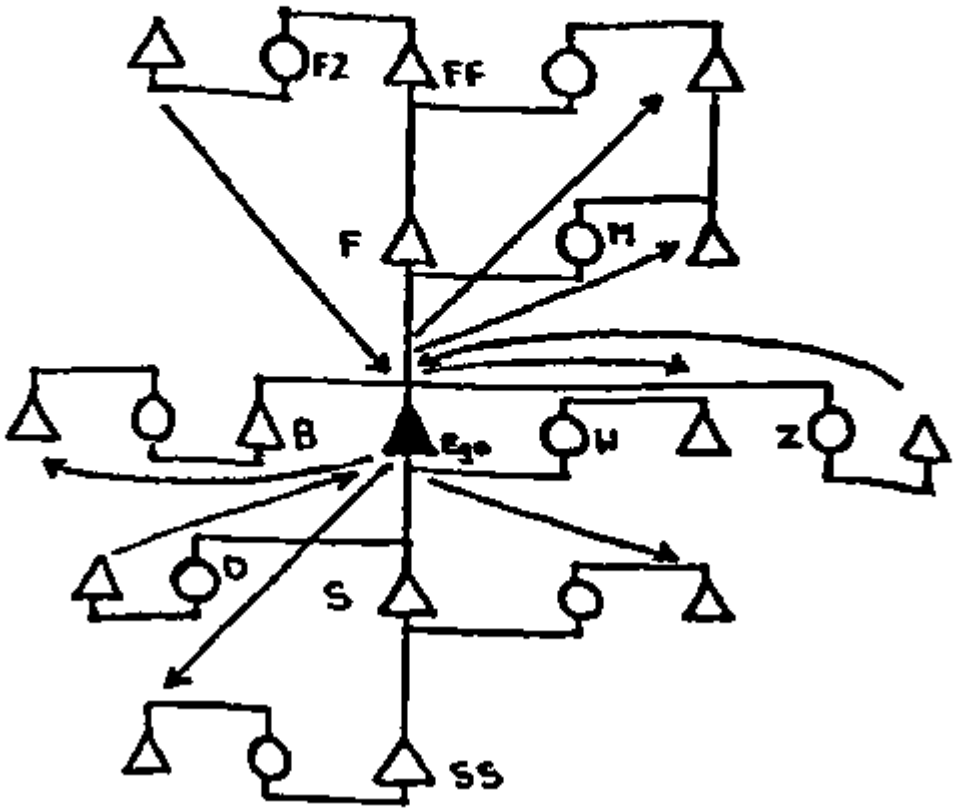

Fig 6.13 Paying and receiving of bride-price by a male ego

Thus from an analysis of the factor of bride-price payment, it is clearly evident that, among the Mudugas, a man in his life time is obliged to pay the bride-price of his father's mother, mother, FB' wife, brother's wife, son's wife and son's wife At the same time he is having the right to claim the bndc-pnce of his father's father's sister, father's sister, sisters, daughters and son's daughters. Here, the factor of bride-price makes for a clear distinction of relatives into two categories. One category consists of women who are agnates belonging to one's own descent group whose bndc-pnce is received, and the other consist of women who are affines and are not members of ones own group for whom bride-price is paid. An important aspect to be noted here is that the FZ and M fall in opposing category, the former b grouped along with sisters and daughters who are

agnates and the later being grouped with brother's wife and son's wife who are affines. This distinction depicted through the aspect of 'giving and taking of bride-price' goes against Dumont's (1953, 1983) logic of Dravidian terminology which places 'mother' in the parallel category and 'father's sister* in the cross category. [2]

Separation and remarriage:

Among the Mudugas, when a man and a woman enter in martial union and start living together, there is no deal that both should live together and co-operate together until death Moreover, there is no rule stating that one should have only one marital union in his life Due to frequent quarrel and dissatisfaction in family life or in case of infertility. the husband and wife separates and thereby stop co-operating in domestic affairs and sharing of food and labour which informally marks the divorce There are instances of divorce or separation between husband and wife due to the infertility of the spouse especially in the case of a woman [13] After separating from the husband, a woman may go back to live in her natal land along with her parents and brothers Among the Mudugas. both men and women after separating from the first spouse arc equally permitted for subsequent marital union There is no difference in treatment between the first marriage and subsequent union They never distinguish between first and second marriage on the basis of status as primary or main marriage, and secondary or subsidiary unions. All marriages arc considered almost equivalent if it is taking place with the consent of their agnates and is also treated legal and socially sanctioned The subsequent union will be given prestige and status if children are produced through the union and the bride price is paid

No ceremony or ritual marks the start of a second mamage, and when a male and a female decide to live together and co-operate in domestic activities sharing labour anti food, the> have started their mantal life Chekidan s son kail of Mele-Abbannoor had first married from Pothupadi hamlet The mamage was formally held with ceremonies and rituals. But after one month, the girl separated from him aad left to her native hamlet After the 'divorce', Kakki's parents were searching *tor* a bride foe him Meanwhile, Kakki fell in love with a girl at Karara hamlet After few months, Kakki came with this girl to Mele-Abbannoor and stayed in a relative's hut away trots his

parent's hut. Kakki and the gni later met his mother and informed her that they are coming to their hut. After that, they both went to Kakki's hut. But the girl did not enter and \\as waiting a little away from the hut. Later, Kakki's younger brother, as informed by his mother, went and invited her to the hut. After entering the hut, she took the \essels and plates from the kitchen to the nearby stream, washed them, fetched water and came back to the hut. This informally marked the beginning of her life at Kakki's hut.

It has already been mentioned that, among the Mudugas, a man and a woman after separating from their spouses are permitted to enter in subsequent marital union. A man is allowed to take a second wife if his first wife dies or is unable to bear him children One can enter in as many union as be can, but the Mudugas never maintain more than one marital union at the same time. Thus polygamy is not practiced among the Mudugas. Out of a total of 107 married members belonging to the 40 households at Thaze-Abbannoor, it is found that 3 of them had married thrice and 20 had married twice in their life time This practice of entering in many subsequent union may be illustrated with the help of few cases

Case 1 Nanjan of Kallamala hamlet after his father's death was staying with his mother at Anavai, his mother's natal land From Anavai, Nanjan went to stay along with one of his sisters mamed to Thundoor hamlet Later Nanjan shifted to Kinnakara where he had another sister residing there While he was at Kinnakara, his lister's husband proposed his mother's sister's daughter for Nanjan Though Nanjan did not agree to tt in the beginning, later started living with her But there occurred frequent quarrels between the husband and wife According to Nanjan, his wife frhowed little concern towards him and was not capable of managing the household affairs. Later, Nanjan got separated from her and went back to Anavai hamlet From Anavai he came to Thaze-Abbannoor where his elder sister Chathi was staying While he was at Thaze-Abbannoor his sister Chathi and her husband Chonke started searching a girl for Nanjan. Later, Mele-Abbannoor Kullan's sister Maruthi from Mele-Abbannooor as proposed, and after getting the consent from her family, Nanjan started living with her He erected a new hut neat his wife's parents and also cultivated the fields nearby his parents-in-law Nanjan then shifted his sta> to Anavai However, Nanjan** life with his second wife was also not different fiom that of the first According to him, frequent quarrels do occur between them because of

her disobedience. From Anavai they shifted to Karara hamlet. While at Karara. marital discord and mal- adjustments occurred between them. and Nanjan had to separate from her. Later he came back to Thaze-Abbannoor and was staying along with his aster Chathi and brother-in-law Chonke. At this time Nanjan became close to Chathi's first husband's brother's daughter Vellachi, who has been divorced by Bokken of Thaze-Abbannoor . They both agreed to live together and Nanjan started his marital life with Vellachi. This marital life lasted only for just two weeks. Vellachi's FyB Neelan advised Nanjan to avoid living with Vellachi since she is in the category of daughter-in-law for him. Thus Nanjan got separated from Vellachi- After this Nanjan went back to Karara hamlet and is staying along with his sister who has shifted from Thundoor hamlet to Karara

Case 2: At Thaze-Abbannoor, Kaden's marriage was held when he was eighteen years old He married his classificatory father's sister's daughter Mallika from Boodar hamlet when she was very young. She stayed along with Kaden in his parent's hut. Later. she gave birth to two children. After this, Kaden always used to complain about Mallika's lack of concern and care for the children, and she became the target for blames. She rarely stayed at Thaze-Abbannoor, but was moving around visiting relatives tn other hamlets Because of her misbehavior and inability to manage the household affairs, frequent quarrel occurred between them which finally led to divorce After one >car, Kaden left Thaze-Abbannoor and went to Kattakkad hamlet and stayed along with Kuppen w ho is a distant 'maman' (mother's brother) for him After about three years Kaden became very close to the *oorukarar* and they all wanted Kaden to marry from that hamlet. At that time, Kaden was interested in Kakki's daughter and he conveyed the matter to Kuppen and his wife. Kuppen informed it to Kakki, and later the girl and her parents agreed for the proposal Later, Kaden presented a bag of provision as gift to the proposed girl's parents and thereafter started living with her which marked the beginning of their marital life.

Kaden then went back with his wife to Thaze-Abbannoor and stayed along with his kinsmen. But after one year, his second wife died. Then again after one year Kaden married Ramu's daughter Polache from Anakkal hamlet. Polache gave birth ft? four children. At present Kaden is living along with his third wife at Thaze-Abbannoor

Case 3 : At Thaze-Abbannoor, *mannukaran* Kakki first married Neelan's daughter Vellachi from karuvara hamlet who was also bis mother's sister-in-law 's daughter. This was a marriage by sister exchange since Kakki's sister was inturn married to Vellachi's brother Chellan. In this union Kakki had two children. After the death of Vellachi, Kakki married his father's classificatory brother-in-law's daughter Chathi from Mele-Abbannoor. He had three children in that union. Later, due to Chathi's ill-health, Kakki separated from her and married his MBD Neeli from Veetiyoor. He is having three children in this union, and Neeli is now living along with Kakki at Thaze-Abbannoor.

No ritual or religious ceremony is associated with the separation of husband and wife due to divorce. Among the Mudugas, the word divorce *is* referred by the term "*bantham bidrathu*", literally meaning, "to give up relationship". Jural divorce is impossible and not practiced, but conjugal separation followed by a subsequent unton is a viable alternative among them. Because of the importance placed cm mutual services-domestic and sexual, as the major aspect of marital life, there is no surprise that conjugal separation practiced by the Mudugas makes little distinction from formal divorce For. when a couple ceases to live together, services inevitably lapse Once a man and a woman separates, there will be no more relationship between them and their interaction comes to an end. This is clearly conveyed in one of their proverbs saying, "*satha uravu irikkum.. vitta uravu theerum*", which means that relationship and interaction may be retained e\cn with the dead, but not with one who has divorced In certain cases, if divorce happens immediately after the marriage before begetting children, then the bride-price, if paid, will be returned by the wife's family to the husband's family such that the husband will not retain any right in her

Though a man and a woman are free to separate from their marital fc, it is to be mentioned here that, other relatives especially parents of the spouse ha e no right to force them for divorce This act of forcing or leadin„ a couple to separate from their marital life is seriously objected by the people At Thaze-Abbannoor Beere's daughter Cheen has been married to Nanjan's son Rangan of the same hamlet. Rangan and Cheen were staying along with Rangan's parent's family Though Rangan was very loyal and fe*J concern towards Cheen, her '*mamai* . Nanjan's behaviour was very harsh and always found fault with her On e while scolding Cheen, Nanjan crossed [illegible] beat his

daughter-in-law. Cheeri complained this to her parents. That day at Thaze-Abbannoor, a *panchayath* meeting was going on for the bride-price payment of Chellan's son Murugan. Beere approached the *panchayath* and after keeping Rs.1 '« as *dakshina*, put forward her case. She complained the *panchayath* that her daughter has been suffering this torture from her father-in-law since her marriage and requested the *panchayath* to separate the union. Then Nanjan was called to the *panchayath* and formal enquiry was made, and finding him guilty was asked to keep Rs.20 as fine towards the *panchayath*. However, Beere was not satisfied with this and she argued for the divorce Both the husband and wife-Rangan and cheeri, were called to the *panchayath* and when asked about their opinion regarding divorce, Cheeri replied that she had no problem with her husband and was not willing for a divorce. Then the *bandari*, who was heading the *panchayath* explained to Beere that the present *panchayath* is not to break a union which was united in some other *panchayath* but will only try to solve the issue Since Beere was arguing for the separation without the consent of the couple and thereby trying to break a family life, the *panchayath* found her guilty and was asked to keep Rs.51 « as fine

Among the Mudugas, there are certain rituals associated with funeral ceremony which formally marks the widowhood of a person. A woman who has become a widow is called *mundassiar*. The moment a woman becomes a widow, her bangles will be removed and it is put in the hands of the dead body of her husband A little hair from the right side of her head and the black beaded necklace (*keeramala*) will be removed and is tied to the big toe of the right leg of the corpse Before the corpse is taken for burial there is another important ceremony called *kodi idrathu* where the brother of the woman puts a cloih o\er her head which formally marks her widowhood. Once the ceremony of *kodi idrathu* is performed, then she should abstain from remarriage and should remain as a widow throughout her life Usually this ceremony is not performed if the woman is \er> young For a man, *kodi idrathu* ceremony is done by his sister

If a woman dies in the early phase of her marriage without begetting children, *the* still belongs to her husband's group and the *pur o-panam* has lo be paid lo her kin group as compensation towards her bod} and bone However, women w be assimilated into iheir husband s descent group only after their death If the husband dies very soon after

marriage without any heir, then usually bride-price need not be paid and the wife will return to her natal land and go for another union. In certain cases, she remains in her husband's hamlet and will get married to her husband's real or classificatory brother. If she is married to her husband's brother, an additional bride-price need not be paid Bat how ever if she begets children for husband's brother, an amount as compensation for the right over children is paid at the time of his her death.

If a woman after separating from her first husband gets married with a man from another kin group and begets children, the right of that children belongs to the second husband and his descent group on payment of compensation. Thus at the time of her death, both the husband's kin group will be paying bride-price to the woman's group However, the husband who has become the genitor of the first child borne by her ts having the ultimate right on the woman's body and bone The second or subsequent husband's payment is considered as a compensation for the right over the children born to them

Even if a woman has separated from her first husband and remarried another man and living with him, she must and it is her obligation to attend the funeral ceremony of her first husband through whom she has begotten first. She should also observe certain rites connected with the funeral That is, although the second husband is having right tn her labour power and right of sexual access in her, these cannot be taken as full right on her body and hence her bone.

If a woman has married more than once and has borne children tn each mam age, where husbands are unrelated, then a dispersed groups of maternal half-siblings are possible In certain cases, young sons may accompany the mother when she remarries, and remain there under the control of the step-father He may even work in the farm for his step-father

In a cultural system where shifting of land is widely practiced, people rarely hold a land permanently. This nature could also be seen in relation to their marriage system- Even though monogamy is the rule, among the Mudugas, a person is not restricted to only one spouse in his life time and the remarriage of a person after the death of his her spouse is not at all uncommon. A person ts having right not only to a particular ficU but have the *ri£H* to shift from one to another when necessary However the genetic

substance of the plant depends on the genetic substance of the respective seeds sown. Thus women who is equated with land is not restricted to a single person, but *others* can ha\e subsequent access to her on the death of her first husband Similarly, every subsequent cultivators have the right in the crops produced by them. But the ultimate right of the land rest with the one who has cleared it, sown seeds and harvested the yield first

Another analogy used by the people to explain the rich! on a woman and the children bom to her is that of 'hunting'. People say that, while in the case of hunting, the right of the animal goes to the one who had first shot the animal Analogous to marriage, this means that normally the man who had first married a woman is having the right fli her However, they added to it saying that, it is not only the question of shooting the animal first which matters, but should be capable enough for making wound on its body and the blood should ooze out as a clear mark of evidence This analogy shows that, even if a man has married a woman, he will not be having strong claim in her unless he has produced children who are the real proof and evidence of marriage But again for them, if a man had shot the animal and have produced deep wound, and if goes without taking the game, he cannot normally claim the nght The next man who had caught the animal will have a nght on it. This clearly points out the fact that just begetting children is not the only criteria for the right in the wife and children, but can have a strong claim only if they are taken care well.

This analogy clearly explains that the actual nght over a woman ts with the husband through whorn she had given birth first But in case if he separates from her and had not taken care of them, then he can claim the right only after paying an amount as fine-*sakkukooli*, towards the woman's km group

The rules regarding rights in wife and children and its actual practice can more clearly be understood by looking into specific cases of bride-price payment as the time of funeral ceremony. Thus the case of bride-price payment during Lacchi's tuner*! shows how it is really working out Lacchi of \ccUyoor hamkt first roamed Kakki s daughter Neeli from the same hamlet. They are having two children in that union. Later Lacchi and Neck separated, and Neeli got married to Kakki of Thaze-Abbannoor After that,

Lacchi married a widow (Malli) from Kallamala hamlet who had a son in her first union. Lacchi is having no children in this second union.

When Lacchi died, issue regarding the right over his first wife Neeli became a matter of serious debate among the people. The situation became complicated when Neeh herself was not willing to accept the bride-price and to give the right of her "body and bone' to Lacchi's group mainly because of the rift she had with Lacchi However, Lacchi's close agnates did not want to give up and were bend upon getting the right in her bone and the children. Neeli's brothers also agreed in favour of Neeli, saying, "when our girl got separated from her husband and was alone with her children, your people were not to be seen and never came for her help, and now in the final moment you are coming for the right"

When the issue remained unresolved, Lacchi's kingroup decided not to proceed with the bride-price payment towards Neeli's kin group for the time, but to settle the bnde-pnee of Lacchi's present wife Malli from Kallamala. Meanwhile, Gandc of Anavai hamlet who is Neeli's son's father-in-law (thus classificatory brother for Neeli), entered and he tned to pursue the matter. After a lengthy talk, he convinced Neeh and made her agree for the transfer of right on her 'body and bone' to Lacchi's group Gandc took the role of the groom's jathi and the *panchayath* was joined for the collection of bride-price Rs 201 % was earmarked as *paniyam* towards Neeli Gandi gave the money to the bride's *jathi* and he gave it to Neeli, who handed over the money to her father's brother Iyyas.

After receiving the money, Iyyas took the bands of Lacchi's children and gave to Lacchi's brother Man. This symbolized the transfer of the children, and the nght in Neeli's body and bone to Lacchi's group Man, then gave Rs.25 ' « to the children and asked them to place before their mother's brother as *thaimamanpanam* (MB's money).

After this, the issue regarding the bride-price of Kallamala wife was taken up and the *panchayath* decided to pay Rs.101 « as *paniyam* towards Kallamala group Lacchi s Kallamala wife's brother was called and asked about the amount be is demanding He replied that he came to Veetiyoor to attend the funeral *of* his *machan* and not for collecting the *paniyam*, and have no demand but will receive whatever they give. Then Gende, who is the groom's *jathi* said, "your sister came and toed here the cared our man...., she fetched water for him ..made *raipattu* and served him. hence it is our

obligation to pay the price towards this. When the *pariyam* was handed over to Lacchi's wife. Gande said to her, "*ithu ninnu panam* (this is your price). *nee eenku banthu bele seithathukku* (since you came here and w orked for our man) *tthu banki, ninnu nattanukku kodu* (take this and gi\e it to your brother)".

Later, Lacchi's both sons and his present wife Malli, and her son were called to the *panchayath*. Gande then advised Lacchi's sons, "this is your *sinnauvai*(mother's sister). and your brother. Here after you have to lake care of them . You should consider her son as your own brother. In future your wives should not ill-treat her"

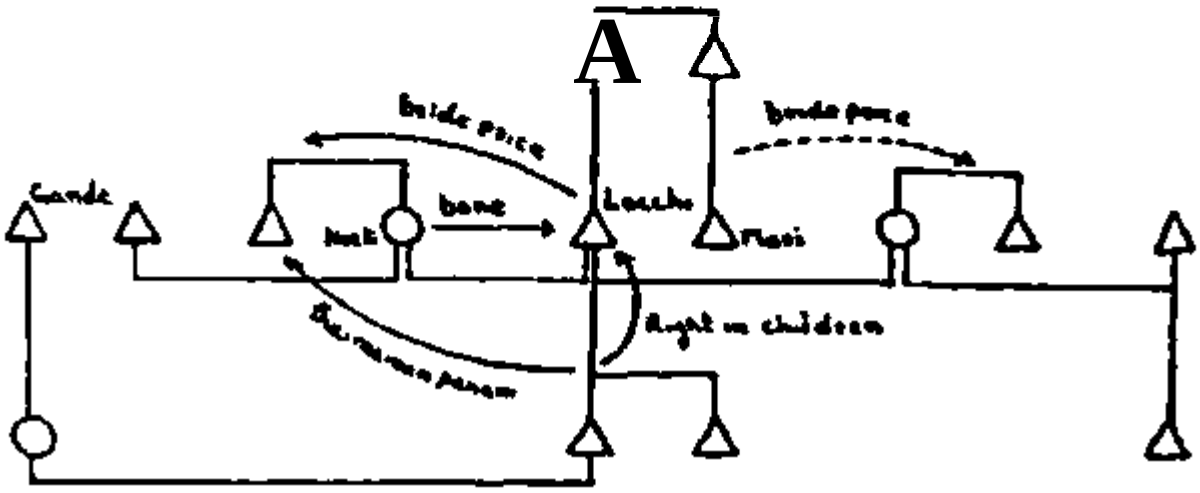

Fig 6 14 Bride-price payment during Lacc hi's funeral

It should be noted that the right o\er the present wife's bone and her son was not claimed by Lacchi's kin group since this right goes to her first husband t kin group and in future when they approach claiming the right, they have to be given back

Though Lacchi separated *from* Neeli, his km group had the ultimate right in her bone By making the bndc-pnce payment, the right in her feoc* and the right in the children has been retained by his group Thus it is to be mentioned that divorce means the disruption of the personal relationship between a man and his wife but does not deprive the busband*s kin of residual rights in a wife and her children.

Determinants of bilateral cross-cousin marriage:

According to Homans and Schneider (1955), the major determinant of unilateral cross-cousin marriage is the locus of jural authority. But revising Homans and Schneider's theory of extension and the assumption of differential affect towards FZ and MB, Allan D. Coult (1962) put forward his explanation that the determinant of unilateral as well as bilateral cross-cousin marriage is the jural authority to dispose of a woman in marriage. His hypothesis to account for bilateral cross-cousin marriage holds that it will occur in societies in which jural authority over a female is either vested tn the woman herself or is split between her mam and patrikin (bilateral authority). On the basis of the above hypothesis, Coult (ibid)asserts that bilateral cross-cousin mamagc should be associated with bilateral societies, since it is in these societies that the greatest occurrence of bilateral jural authority would be expected. But he adds that if bilateral cross-cousin marriage occurs in unilineal society, jural authority will be bilateral or woman will have right of self disposal in marriage.

The occurrence of bilateral cross-cousin marriage among the patrilineal Mudugas can be closely associated with the right and authority or obligations attached to certain category of kin. Among the Mudugas, the initiative in marriage is taken by the father of the boy, without whose consent the boy's maternal kin or the boy himself cannot do anything However, it is to be mentioned here that the authority is not fully vested with the father, but the mother will also share the right and authority and ha\c a major role in the decision making of her son's marri age On the other hand, either the father or the mother of a girl will under no circumstances demean themselves in tending proposal for the mamagc of their daughter Rather, they wait for proposals to come from their kin circle for their daughters.

There exist strong sibling solidarity among the Mudugas and since a father is having intimacy and close link with FZ, he prefers to propose his TO for his son Similarly, a mother takes initiative in making proposal for her son with her brother** daughter. This type of situation regarding the tarns of authority and initiative in marriage can be attributed to a tendency towards bilateralty exhibited by the Mudugа society However. Mudugas cannot be labeled as a bilateral society though it shows tendencies of bilateralty like strong alignment between MB and ZS wide ranging exchange relation

with maternal kin and affines, and women retaining relation with their natal group even after marriage. Since it is not a bilateral society, there cannot be expected a bilateral jural authonty. but only tendencies of bilateral jural authority which *is* depicted by the sharing of locus of initiative by the father and mother. However, this riejit and authority in marriage enjoyed by the mother in no case is extended to the MB as m the case of bilateral society Rather, the authority is restricted to members within the nuclear family.

However, according to Coult, it is not the jural authonty over a male seeking a wife but o\ er the female being sought as wife which is the immediate determinant. Thus it is significant to mention here that even though neither the F nor the M form the locus of initiative in marriage of their daughter among the Mudugas, the authonty and right over a daughter lies with both the father and mother Hence, the vito power or the final decision whether to accept a proposal or not with regard to the marriage of a daughter is shared by both the father and mother. Without the consent and decision of the girts parents, the maternal kin (MB) or paternal kin (FZ) of the girl cannot do anything

Thus Coult's thesis associating bilateral cross-cousin marriages with societies having bilateral authorities cannot be fully rejected. Taking lead from his theory, the tendency towards bilateral authonty depicted by the patrilineal Muduga society could answ er the occurrence of the bilateral cross-cousin marriage

The Mudugas-Kurumba intermarriage :

The Mudugas of Attappady do not constitute an endogamous group in the ideal sense but intermarry with their neighboring group, the Kurumbas, with whom they have frequent interactions. There exist no status difference between the two groups and they ha\e a mutual 'give and take' relationship The Mudugas consider the neighbouring Kurumbas as their allies and equivalent to them and arc included in their endogamous circle with regard to marital exchange

Table 6 3 shows the details of mantal exchanges in 9 Muduga and 2 Kurumba hamlets which have taken place with the other hamlets of Attappady including the Kurumbas. Data shows that out of a total of 472 marriages recorded from the 9 Muduga hamlets, 121 (25 63%) were with the neighbouring group Kurumbas. From the table, it is understood that mantal exchanges take place more freq-jemht betw era hamlets that are

Table 4.1 distribution of marital exchanges with other families
Mudiaga families

Non-mudiaga families

Name of the families	MA	TH	TA	OM	V	PT	RO	AN	CH	PA	KR	MA	KI	IK	KI	MI	CD	CK	VR	IA	TD	MR	IE	MI	AV	KR	PB	O	G	L	PK	GE	E	OR	NO	NP	No and % of with Mudiaga	m	ch	gv numbers
Mele Abbaynaw			1		2		8	1			4	3	5	1				1	2			1			2	5	3	1	3	1	1			1	1	21 (60.9%)		5	48
Pandal	7	3	2	1	6			2		3	1	5	1	5	4	4	1	1		1	1			4	1		4	1	1					1	9	(68.8%)		6	49
Thare Abbaynaw	7	1	19	1	12			10	6	9	1	1		4				2		10	1		1	1	7		1	1	1						2-0 (66)		6	33
Anakal		3	3	4	2		1	1	1	2	1		1	2		3				2		1		1	3	1			3	1						32 (66.6%)		1	33
[redacted]			5			4				4				2		1	1	4	1	2				1	1	3				1						26 (81.2%)		1	75
[redacted]				5		2	1		1	3		4		1		4	1	2	1	3	1			2		1		1		1					1	27 (79.4%)		1	84
[redacted]	7	1	4	2	3				6	2	4	1	1	2	2	2				2				1	4			1			1				3	49 (75%)	1	2	
[redacted]	1			1	7			1			7	1		4	1		1			2				1		1		2			1					18 (72.2%)		1	
[redacted]	1		2	1	3					3			1	1	1	3	3				1							1			1				3	21 (39.1%)		1	3
[redacted]	3		4			1						4			1		1			3	1	1		7			1	1	1	4	2					15 (49.6%)	21	1	33
[redacted]			7							1							1	1		2	1	1		7		4	3	1	1	3	1	1	4			13 (27.9%)	31	1	5

[redacted] Abbaynaw [redacted] Thandow [redacted] Thare Abbaynaw [redacted] Anakal [redacted] Pandal [redacted] Kumsaynah
[redacted] Anakal [redacted] Chinsu [redacted] Pandal [redacted] Kumsa [redacted] Mele Kabkapah [redacted] Kumsa [redacted] Thare Kabkapah [redacted] Kabkamda
[redacted] Mudiaga [redacted] Sendidim [redacted] Indabkamda [redacted] Kumsa [redacted] Kumsa
[redacted] Thandowda [redacted] Mandowda [redacted] Thare [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] Kabkamda [redacted] Kumsa [redacted] Kabkamsaynaw [redacted] Pandaynaw
[redacted] Kumsa [redacted] Kumsa [redacted] Thandowda [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] Chinsu [redacted] Kabkamda
[redacted] Kumsa [redacted]

Total [redacted] exchanges with

Mudiaga	Kumsa
33 A (70.97%)	121 (98.63%)

situated nearby. Similarly, it is noted that the percentage of marital exchange with Kurumbas are more when the hamlets are in close proximity. Thus Mele-Abbannoor, which is the closest Muduga hamlet to the kurumba area is having the maximum percentage (36.58%) of marital exchanges with the kurumbas. Thaze-Abbannoor which is also located near to Male-Abbannoor is having 3333% marital exchange with the Kunimbas. Similarly, the table shows that Anakkal hamlet is having 3333% marriages with the kurumbas, Veetiyoor 20%, Pottikal 19.48%, Mele-Kakkupadi 13 79%, Thaze-Kakkupadi -17.64%, Cholakkadu 18.75 V and Ommala 21.73% marriage relation with the Kunimbas.

The details of marital relations from the two Kurumba hamlets where survey has been conducted shows that, Thadikundu which is closest to the Muduga area is having 39 47% marriage exchange with the Mudugas and Thaze-Thodukki which is comparatively far away is having 27.90% of marriage with the Mudugas.

The notion of descent aspects in contracting marriage relationship* and the concern to maintain strict endogamy among themselves is to an extend very weak among the Mudugas. The Muduga-Kurumba alliance relationship cannot be explained based on a single and particular reasoning, but there are various other factors also which have their role in permitting this marital exchange between the two groups.

The Mudugas and Kunimbas inhabit in almost the tame geographical and ecological setting of the Attappady valley The Kurumbas arc seen towards the uplands and hill slopes comprising the Pudur panchayat while the Mudugas are restricted to the South Western foot hills and the plains of the Attappady range comprising mainly the Pudur and Agali panchayaths. Thus certain hamlets of the Mudugas in Pudur panchayat and the border areas are in close proximity with the Kurumbas which malts them to maintain frequent social interaction with their adjacent group. But at the same time it is noted that the Muduga hamlets in Sholayur panchayat situated Car away from the kurumba area have less interaction with the Kurumbas.

Table 63 on marriage geography of the Mudugas shows that the percentage of Muduga – Kurumba marital exchange is maximum between feamkis when they are in close proximity and is minimum between hamlets situated far apart especially in the case of Muthikulam hamkt in Sholayur panchayat which « having wo marital relationship

with the Kurumbas. Thus it is strongly assumed that this geographical nearness and their inhabitation in similar ecological setting makes for a strong and frequent social interaction between the two groups which intum must have led to the intermarriage.

Apart from the Mudugas and Kurumbas, the third tribal group inhabiting the Attappady valley of Palaghat district are the Irulas. Among these three tribal groups, Irulas numbering more than 19,000 is numerically dominant and the Mudugas around 2,755 and Kurumbas around 1,280 are numerically very less which when put together is just 1/5 of the entire Irula community.[14] Moreover, the Irulas believed lo have migrated from the border areas of Tamil Nadu and settled in Attappady are strictly endogamous and maintain very less interaction with the Mudugas and Kurumbas and there exist a high degree of taboo between the Irulas and these two groups in marital and dietary habits.

This demographic aspect together with the strong similarities tn customs and practices, and their frequent social interaction are some other factors creating a favorable situation which makes the Mudugas and Kurumbas enter tn alliance relationship with each other

Myths and stones prevalent among the Mudugas show evidence that the ancestors of both Mudugas and Kurumbas were related as brothers. The Mudugas and Kurumbas are different tribal groups and have variations. But they are both of a similar kind at the structural level existing in close proximity, and maintain close interaction. There arc ample historical evidences through many of their myths and stones depicting the Muduga - Kurumba interaction and their marital relationship which had prevailed *from* the very olden period itself Among these, one of the Myths clearly says about the alliance relationship which had taken place between Mele-Abbannoor hamlet and Anavai Kurumba hamlet.

In the very olden time there lived a Panan and Paru (great grand parent*) at Mele-Abbannoor hamlet and another Pattan and Paru at Kudukummannu which is a Kurumba hamlet. The Kadukumannu Pattan and Paru used to visit Mannarkad market once in a month to trade forest products and to buy household provisions, and they always went via Mele-Abbannoor. During that time, the Pattan of Mele-Abbannoor was in heavy dispute and rivalry with another Pattan of a nearby hamlet. One day be attacked Mele-Abbannoor and killed both the Pattan and Paru and ran away leaving their small child

That day the Pattan and Parti of Kadukumannu while passing Mele-Abbannor on their w ay to Mannarkad, heard the crying of the child and were shocked to see the old parents lying dead. They felt pity *for* the small child and tied a cradle on the branch of a nearby tree and kept the child in it and went to Mannarkad. While coming back from the market, they saw the small child sitting very happy after eating the food which they had kept near him. The old parents liked the child very much and took him to their hamlet, cared him and brought up along with their daughter.

When both the boy and the girl reached maturity, the Kadukumannu pattan decided to get his daughter married to the Mele-Abbannoor Pattan's son. But when the boy came to know about this, objected it saying that since be had grown up along with the girl from childhood in the same hut, she is like a sister for him and cannot even think of marrying her. But the Kadukumannu Pattan wanted the boy to marry only his daughter and forced him for the marriage. Afraid of this, the boy had no other option, only to ran aw ay from the hamlet Seeing this, the Kadukumannu Pattan chased him, and when the boy w as nearing Anavai hamlet, the Pattan cried aloud to Anavai Pattan to catch hold of the boy w ho is running aw ay That time Anavai Pattan along with hts seven daughters were engaged in their farm work Hearing the words of Kadukumannu Pattan, Anavai Pattan asked his daughters to catch the boy Thus the seven daughters chased the boy and caught him by the shoulders of his dress from either side He then removed his clothes and tried to ran away from them Seeing his struggle to escape, all the girls started laughing and they felt pity for htm and tned to lave him from the Kadukumannu Pattan Later the boy fell in lov with the girls. Knowing thus, Anavai Pattan expressed his willingness to gne his daughters to the boy and gave shelter from Kadukumannu Pattan allowing him to stay with him for few days. After that he married the seven daughters and came back to Mele-Abbannoor has natal land.

The abo\e myth shows that alliance rcUDomfop between the Mudugas and Kurumbas is not a practice which is of recent origin, and it is evident that a similar son of relationship existed between Mele-Abbannoor and Anavai Kurumba fcealet Even now Mele-Abbannoor people consider Anavai people as their affines *mad* Kadukumannu people arr treated as *anna-thampi*

Another important factor making for the alliance relationship between the Mudugas and the Kurumbas and its continuous occurrence is the very nature of their kinship terminological system. The Muduga terminology divides the entire relatives into two categories — marriageable and unmarriageable. The terminological distinction into categories and the cross-cousin marriage rule embedded in it exist in order to regulate raamage. Among the Mudugas, marriage exchange operates very rarely giving prior importance and consideration to the notion of descent group exogamy That is, they give preference to category rather than group. If a tmton occurs between a patrilineal segment of the Mudugas with that of the Kurumbas, the nature of the kinship terminology assimilate the new members into the kinship universe systematically categorising and defining the affinal relation. An important aspect of the categories ts that, they are a permanent and ordered constellation, and once a marriage union is established, this alliance relationship forms an enduring system with the structure remaining unaltered There is always a functional correlation between the terminological categories and exogamy These terminologies systematically categorise and define marriageable partners in the entire kinship universe of any person. This nature of their alliance operation based on the rule of categories giving less importance to descent criteria permits to contract further marital exchanges with the Kurumbas with distinct descent groups, without causing any structural alteration.

It is very apparent that both the Mudugas and Kurumbas represent a homogenous social system and they are two of a kind at the structural level Both have a patrilineal descent organisation with a positive marriage rule permitting bilateral cross-cousin marriage and there exist no status difference between the two. The most important thing to be mentioned here is that in both the system, the rauo of corporate kinship (descent) to alliance is the same [5] : that is, in both system, there is a strong emphasis on corporate kinship but an equail> strong emphas s oa alliance There are also other structural similarities in berth the system i.e., the brother-sister tie or the sibling solidarity is strong and significant among both the Mudugas and Kurumbas, at the same time the marital tie is relatively weak. It ts also noted that, irrespective of their descent nature, there is a strong complementary filiation amon, the Mudugas and Kurumbas. The Mudugas and Kurumbas represent two separate systems each consisting of various interrelated parts

functioning together. However, i, is observed that parts r f both c systems show certain similarities in fl^ structure as well as fcnctJoning which fa the smooth interaction between these two systems without creating structural disturbances or disintegration. This structural similarities has *Us* definite role, and functions as a major factor for the existing Muduga - Kurumba marital alliances. This particular nature of the two systems and their similar functioning could very well answer the widely prevalent Muduga-Kurumba intermarriages.

NOTES :

1. There is no terminological distinction which differentiate between elder and younger cross-cousins. This shows that the relative age of spouses is not an important criterion in the selection of a bride or groom, and the potential mates of an individual are usually the cross-relatives of his own generation.
2. Though the dimension of generation is central to Dravidian kinship system, it is not uncommon to find cases of generational equivalence or the merging of kin types between generations atleast with regard to behaviour (see Trautmann 1981). Nevertheless, Yalman (1962; 1967) strongly argues for the importance of generational distinction when he says that the rule restricting an individual to marry a person from his own generation ts as important as that of prohibiting parallel cousins from sexual intercourse.
3. Among the Mudugas, Sunday is considered as the most auspicious day to start with the marriage procedure and moreover if so the bride could enter the groom's hut on the next day, i.e., Monday which is also considered as an auspicious day
4. *Aan-jathi* is an affine to the groom's family who act as the mediator or 'third man for the groom's side and *pennu -jathi* will be an affine to the bride s family who perform the role of the 'third man* for the bride's group during the *panchayath* meeting
5. *Pakkala-panam* is also known as *muthal panam* which is the initial amount placed before the *panchayath* by the groom's father or his immediate agnates towards the payment of bride-price
6. Mudugas also equate the groom with cattle herder (*mann aan*) and the bride will be equated with female cattle (*madu*). In some cases, a woman will also be equaled with a plantain and the children with the seedlings.
7. In few cases of marriage ceremonies (especially during the marriage of Kaden s son Kali of Mele-Abbannoor), after the bride-price payment is over, there is a short ritual which symbolizes the union between the groom and the bride For this, a betel leaf is taken and after applying lime, it is torn into two halves and each half will be taken by the groom and the bride and they exchange it. Following this, a glass of water is

be given to the groom and after drinking half of it, he gives it to the bride and she completes it. After this, the bride's *jath* will take the hands of both bnde and groom clasped together and give ft to the groom's *jathi* who then pass it over to the groom's father.

S. *Mappilakal* are affines especially 'son-in-laws' of a descent group or *koottam* who are in charge of cooking and sening of food which is considered as their obligation on ceremonial occasions of the particular descent group

9 The "compensation interpretation" views bride-service as a transaction w here the goal of young men is to obtain and control rights in women, and that of fathers is to obtain adequate compensation before giving up their daughters. Since women arc considered valuable as producers and reproducers, their km groups are reluctant to part with them unless they are compensaled for the cost of raising them, and for the future return that could be expected from their labour (see Bossen 1988)

10 Since the Mudugas hold the *panchayath* meeting in the front-yard of huts or the open space in the centre of the hamlet *katam*. the *panchayath* is also referred at a *katam*

11 This equation of women with a plantain and the children with the seedlings clearly depicts the aspect of complementary filiation inherent in the Muduga kinship

12 Inconsistency in Dumont's scheme of cross/parallel distinction has been noticed by many anthropologists (Gough 1959, 1966. Tambiah 1958, Allen 1975, Good 19S0 Reddy 1984) asserting that Dumont's logic of placing mother* in the paralle category and ' father's sister* in the cross category ts misleading, and argued for a terminological analysis which 'corresponds to the actual kinship conf guration in a society

13 Any marital union usable to beget children will never be recognised and given due prestige and status by the society At Thaze-Abbannoor, \ ellinkiri andKade were not having an> children even after few years since their marriage This created suspicion among the family members especially her parents-in-law and she was send back to her hamlet doubting that the ts a sterile woman (*baradi*) who can never give birth to children. However, one year later \ ellinkiri himse f went and fe**%*g£t her back to his hamlet and through a medicine-man (*pattukar* could able to find out

that she was affected by some evil spirits. Counter treatments were done through magic after which she became pregnant.

14. According to the Attappadi Tribal Development project survey, 1991.

15. Leach notes (1961:26) that "in any gien social system, we shall always find some kind of notion of corporate kinship which stands supposed to some kind of notion of alliance as p is to q, but what we can usefully compare as between different societies are not those particular p's and q's (regarded as separate institutions), but the ratio of p to q considered as mathematical function".